

Women Principals in Kwazulu-Natal Reshaping the Landscape of Educational Leadership

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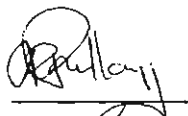
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Declaration of Originality

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



A. R. Pillay

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Abstract

The concept and approaches of leadership focused mainly on the male experience and interpretation of what constitutes leadership. Studies on leadership in the main have ignored the perspective of women and this then impacts on the description of leadership in its entirety as a concept of 'one size fits all'. This study investigates the leadership perspective as enacted and experienced by women principals in secondary schools. The study combined both the quantitative and qualitative paradigm. A survey questionnaire was used to ascertain the leadership styles of women principals throughout the province of KwaZulu Natal. Semi-structured interviews conducted with four women principals from the four ex- education departments were used to gain a deeper insight of the experiences of female principals as leaders.

The study concludes that the features of the female principals leadership approach is participatory and transformational, where transformational refers to shared influence and co-operation, participative decision-making, teamwork and the concept of power for the empowerment of members of the organization. The importance of this finding is that it reflects that women as leaders are inclined to the transformational approach because it favours their feminine values of nurturing and caring.

In the context of change and transformation in South African schools, it would be in the best interests of school principals, regardless of gender, to adopt a more transformational approach so as to empower individuals, develop an environment of trust and capitalize on unique and diverse abilities, skills and talent in order to change schools from a bureaucratic, top-down organization to a more democratic one. Given the critical role principals play in transforming schools, this finding suggests that appointing more women to leadership positions would have a beneficial effect.

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ACRONYMS

SMT	School Management Team
DET	Department of Education and Training
DEC	Department of Education and Culture
HOR	House of Representatives
HOD	House of Delegates
EX	Previous
NED	National Education Department

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The traditional concept of leadership, which focused on a hierarchical system of control and emphasized power, individualism and authority relations, is in the process of undergoing change and transformation. The South African Schools Act (1996) creates a whole new approach to leading, managing and governing schools. The new approach sees devolution of power. The principal as leader no longer holds all the responsibility for running a school. This role is formally shared with the School Management Team (SMT).

This new democratic approach to leadership challenges school leaders to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to participate in running schools. However it cannot be overlooked that the leadership style of the principal is influential in determining the effectiveness of the school as an organization. The principal through his/her leadership sets the tone of the school's ethos and climate and establishes parameters within which other sources of influence may function. The new South Africa's awareness not only of racial but also gender inequities has resulted in more women being appointed to very male dominated levels of the educational system.

Therefore the focus of my study is to investigate the leadership approaches of women principals in secondary schools. School leadership is an important factor, which is influential on educators' morale, job satisfaction and motivation. The new approach to leadership involves a process of influencing group activities toward setting goals and achieving these goals.

1.2 The Research Problem

The Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, provides for equality before the law and for protection and benefit of the law to everyone. It also allows for positive discrimination in context of previous structural discrimination as a result of apartheid through affirmative action. The Gender Equity Act (1996) is such an act promulgated to

redress the under-representation of women in management and leadership positions.

Female educators are now becoming visible as principals of Secondary schools as a result of this legislation. These women principals must determine key elements that will enable them to successfully manage and lead schools in this era of transformation.

The new approach advocates devolution of power, which represents a marked shift from the traditional hierarchical system of control, which emphasized power, individualization and authority relations. In my attempt to investigate the leadership approaches of women principals, I will focus on two critical questions:

- (i) What leadership approaches/styles do secondary school women principals in KwaZulu-Natal claim to exhibit?
- (ii) Why do they favour particular leadership approaches/styles they claim to exhibit?

1.3 Rationale and Background

Despite the gender equity legislation, I, as a senior member of management (deputy principal) in a combined school, am very conscious of the fact that female principals constitute a small portion of the total number of principals in comparison with our male counterparts. In the surrounding vicinity of my school there are 6 secondary schools and 8 primary schools. Of the 6 secondary only 1 has a female principal and of the 8 primary schools, 2 are headed by women principals. I have experienced that male managers willingly collaborate with their male counterparts but overlook or undervalue input from females on the School Management Team. At principals' meetings only a few women are present and the chairperson of such forums is male principals. It was also observed that female educators despite occupying positions of leadership are usually given the tasks of overseeing the provision of refreshments when major school functions are organized.

Despite democratisation and legislation the upward mobility of women in leadership positions in schools has been slow. At a conference on Women in Management on 10-12 April 2003, in Durban, the acting Minister of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Premier Lionel Mtshali disclosed that out of 6000 schools in KwaZulu-Natal only 571 were headed by women and of the 71% of women in education only 14% were represented at

senior management levels. This figure confirms that KwaZulu-Natal has a low number of women in leadership positions despite the fact that there is no formal discrimination on the grounds of gender. This also shows the concern at higher political levels about women in educational leadership positions. It also confirms that senior positions of leadership are still the preserve of men. The extent of gender inequality was also noted by the department's deputy director-general, Simon Mbokazi, when nine men and only one woman was shortlisted for the position of education director which was advertised in KwaZulu-Natal (2003). In spite of the introduction of equal opportunities policies in South Africa since 1994, leadership has been male-dominated. According to the report of the Gender Equity Task Team of the Department of Education in South Africa (Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez 1997) female educators are mainly in the lower ranks of the teaching profession and the position of black women in leadership positions is weaker.

Promotion opportunities for women are limited as a result of values and beliefs that reinforce stereotypical expectations about appropriate female and male behaviour. The role of women in our patriarchal society has been defined as that of housewife and mother, nurturer and caregiver, which is not seen as part of leadership. According to Yasmin "a women's role in the household as wife, mother, and daughter-in-law is on the one hand idealized while on the other, outside of the household, she is punished for acting according to these roles" (1997:200). The roles and responsibilities of women within the home have precedence over other priorities resulting in it spilling over into the workplace. It is viewed as a mother's responsibility to stay at home when a child falls ill, but such absence from work in order to fulfil these responsibilities is viewed as inefficiency.

There is also the perception that women, as principals are not as effective as their male counterparts. This view is based on the ideology that the post of a leader requires the physical strength and power as exuded by the male species. In order for women to prove themselves as leaders, Grogan (1996) contends that women imitate the masculine characteristics associated with men, that of being aggressive and authoritarian. Therefore the approach that women use to lead might give individuals the impression that they are incapable of running the school as an organization. Thus a women's style of leadership

appear to hinder career advancement (Hall 1996). A woman's competence is viewed differently from that of a man. According to Beatty, leadership and positions of power "are reasserted through strict emotional control and suppression – the maintenance of exclusively and dominantly rational appearance" (2000:334). Therefore, the myth that women are emotionally unstable, irrational and unsuitable to lead, hinder them from achieving the high ranks of leadership.

Women's style of leadership has also been identified as inferior to men's and therefore harmful to organizations. This view is noted by Grogan, who states "women's ways of leading are considered secondary or subordinate to men's ways" (1999:527) and also emphasized by Rosener who claims "being viewed as different has meant being viewed as deficient or deviant" (1995:33). Moreover, the perception that the principalship is a demanding position and that women are not able to meet those demands is another setback against which women principals have to function. Legislation to combat discrimination is already in place in South Africa but the problem lies on re-socialising society and conscientising the male world to accept women as effective leaders. Women principals therefore have the task of reshaping their role in a male-dominated world and focus on different strategies that women might employ in order to be effective leaders.

Mainstream literature as well as approaches (as reviewed in Chapter 2) and research on educational management and leadership reveal that an androcentric bias, view and shape educational leadership through the male lens only (Shakeshaft 1987; Blackmore 1993). This gendering of educational leadership approaches shaped the perception that the job of the principalship needs certain traits and qualities that are associated that with men, but not inherent in women. The expectation created was that women will imitate men in order to be successful leaders. However, research as found in literature indicate that women principals use leadership approaches different from those associated with men in order to be effective leaders (Hall 1996).

I am hopeful that the findings that will emerge from my research will contribute to understanding the management and leadership of women principals. Their experiences can be incorporated in leadership training material, which can be beneficial to other

women aspiring towards leadership positions. New ideas of leadership, which includes female values and ethos, can be incorporated with other effective leadership styles, thus enhancing inclusivity and empowerment.

South Africa is a country in the process of political, social and economic transformation. This transformation emphasizes racial equality and gender equity. The role of women is critical to transformation. I do hope to conscientise women about their majority in the field of education and the successes that have been achieved by women as leaders of schools. This awareness could assist in increasing the number of women who apply for leadership positions and the influence and authority of women principals. There will then be greater opportunities of changing a dominant male – defined concept of leadership at schools.

Presently there are few women in leadership positions resulting in males dominating the selection and promotion procedures. This situation has led to masculine attitudes, which impact negatively towards female capabilities. This study will most certainly contribute towards knowledge relating to women in leadership and provide a basis for further research in this field. Such information will contribute to understanding whether women employ purely feminine strategies or resort to male characteristics in an effort to be viewed as effective leaders. This research will then be able to benefit the following:

- Female Principals as it will allow them the opportunity to undertake a process of introspection and critically assess their current leadership styles.
- Aspirant female Principals as it will provide them with a knowledge base to equip them to function effectively in leadership posts.
- Male Principals as it will provide them with invaluable insight into the manner in which female principals operationalized the concept of leadership and to improve their understanding and collegial relationship with women.
- Departmental Officials who will be able to structure workshops to assist female Principals function effectively.

Educational reform in South Africa requires unique leadership abilities and skills in order to redress the inequities and inequalities of the past.

1.4 Outline of the Study

In chapter two, literature is reviewed in order to gain an understanding of the general approaches on leadership in the educational context as well as features of leadership characteristic to women's way of leadership.

In chapter three the research methodology used in this study is explained. The qualitative and quantitative paradigm in which the study is located is discussed. Finally the method for collecting and analysing data and the limitations of this study are highlighted.

Chapter four is a presentation of the main results and findings of how school leadership is enacted and experienced by the women principals in this study as reported by them. The findings are presented in the following categories: features of leadership, decision-making strategies, gender and leadership, delegation and conflict management.

In chapter five a discussion of the main findings on how women principals' experience leadership is given. This is followed by recommendations to assist women in educational leadership.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the concept of leadership and review research related to it. Several approaches to leadership and how these approaches include or ignore the leadership of women are explored. Given that males have dominated leadership in the educational arena it was therefore necessary to focus on the andocentric bias and cultural concept of leadership, the effect that it has upon women and their socialization into leadership. This is followed with an overview of literature concerning the barriers to women aspiring to, or occupying the rank of leaders and women's navigation of territory defined as 'masculine'. Important aspects such as decision-making, vision, values and beliefs that contribute to effective school leadership are also explored. It was also imperative to take into consideration the qualities essential to good leadership in schools in an age of change and transformation.

2.2 Concept of Leadership

The changing nature of leadership has aroused much interest and debate in organizations. The concept of leadership does not subscribe to a specific definition. Koontz and Weihrich (1988:437) view leadership "as influence, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals". Good leadership is often, viewed by some as equivalent to popularity while others portray it as aggressive action. According to Owens (1995) leadership consists of the interaction between personalities and circumstances, as interpreted by the group.

The essence of leadership focuses on a group process where a relationship between the leader and followers develop. Followers therefore play a significant role in defining and

shaping the strength of a leader's influence, the leadership style and the success of the group performance. The leader functions as a facilitator in order to stimulate, direct and co-ordinate the activities and interactions of the group. Leadership will then most certainly require sound communication, the ability to be creative and a certain amount of authority, influence and power. The role of the principal as leader is critical as it impacts on the learning and teaching in a school. The central attributes of authority, influence and power, which aptly define a leader, will be discussed next.

2.3 Power, Authority and Influence

Essential to leadership is the question of how power is exercised. According to Van Der Westhuizen "power is the ability to and manner in which an educational leader executes his authority" (1991:171). However, Grobler (1993) advocates a different concept of power. He claims that one can achieve ultimate power by giving it to the people who work for you. This newer democratic concept of power, referred to as *empowerment*, flows from bottom-up, rather than top-down in organizations. This results in the redistribution of power and a flatter structure of management. According to Owens (1995) leaders are powerful people because power is the basic energy for initiating and sustaining action that translates intention into reality when people try to work collaboratively.

The leader uses her authority in directing group activity towards the realization of common goals not only through legitimate power, but often also through controls of valued rewards (reward power), the power of knowledge (expert power), the power to punish (coercive power) and charismatic power that draws respect and attracts others to the leader. It must be noted that the use of authority as a source of power may result in followers lacking in motivation and drive especially if they do not value the rewards controlled by the person in authority.

Influence, according to Bush (1995) represents an ability to affect outcomes and depends on personal characteristics and expertise. Bacharach and Lawler (in Bush 1995:80) makes following distinctions between authority and influence:

- Authority is viewed as the static, structural aspect of power in organizations whereas influence is viewed as the dynamic, tactical element.
- Authority is the formal aspect of power; and influence is the informal aspect.
- Authority implies involuntary submission by subordinates; influence implies voluntary submission and does not necessarily entail a superior-subordinate relationship.
- Authority flows downward, and is unidirectional; but influence is multidirectional and can flow upward, downward and horizontally.

In order for leadership to be effective there should exist a process that has the “potential for two-way influence and power-sharing” (Hollander 1993:31). The leader would therefore benefit by using influence as members of the organization will volunteer, willingly carry out certain activities and tasks with a sense of commitment and enthusiasm.

An issue that needs to be examined is what type of power do women as leaders choose and how do they utilize this power. Hall (1996) and Rosener (as cited in Owens 1995) in their studies arrive at the conclusion that women use power to empower others and in so doing achieve the goals of the organization. This study by Rosener concludes that women are more personal in their style, share information and promote the empowerment of followers. The women principals in the study by Hall (1996:145) shared their view of leadership in the following way:

Power was not about being censorious, belittling or destructive, or taking arbitrary decisions, being hierarchical or confrontational. It meant being able to make things happen by distributing the resources, interacting in ways that left others confident in their actions, enabling others to do things, being thoroughly organized and prepared, having a vision and shaping a culture.

2.4 Gendered Concept of Leadership

According to Blackmore (1993:27) “Educational theory and administrative practice have been dominated by men, who have acted as gatekeepers in setting the standards, producing the social knowledge and decreeing what is significant, relevant and important in the light of their own experience”. It is difficult to separate culture from leadership since male domination and hegemony entrenched schools as bureaucracies and characterized teaching as a female profession.

Shakeshaft (1993) in her study on the under representation of women in school administration in the United States of America, reports that female educators were treated less favourably than were male educators resulting from attitudes that assigned less value to women. Women were identified by their sex and called “Miss” but men were acknowledged for the roles played and called “Professor”. These patterns of male dominance became a norm and limited women’s access to leadership in schools. Beliefs that women were incapable of discipline as a result of their size and strength militated against them serving as leaders. Blackmore (1993) further examines the cultural perspective of leadership and administration that makes the association of school leadership to be masculine, “that of heterosexual, white, rational, and technically capable male” (p.30).

Historically, social meaning was derived by differences and relationships between males and females. This notion of what was feminine, and that which was masculine led to a division of labour according to gender. This ideology that serves to separate is accepted by the majority and re-enacted at the level of the school culture. “A cultural perspective suggests that embedded in organizations are subtle innuendos, images, valuings and language which exclude many women, such as dominant masculinist images of leadership”. (Blackmore 1993:29). The profile of women who performed the task of teaching was one of caring and nurturing, emotion and irrational behaviour. This ideology then assisted in entrenching the patriarchal system in schools. Teaching children is associated with motherhood, marriage and the caring aspects of femininity (Adler et al

1993). By viewing teaching as a feminine occupation, women's status was delimited. This served as a barrier commonly referred to as the glass ceiling to women achievement in gaining positions of leadership and power. The characteristic of caring served both to be the responsibility of women as well as their downfall.

These barriers and expectations of women are rooted in cultural factors in many societies. Thus feminist theory focused on social change to achieve gender justice. Feminist theory is mainly concerned with women's subordination to men, how it arose, how and why it is perpetuated and how it might be changed. Socialist feminists are concerned with women's position within the economy and the family. They draw attention to the role of the school in reproducing a sexual as well as social division of labour in the family and in the workplace. Women because of their status were restricted to low paid employment. Feminists challenged the patriarchal nature of society and male dominance in organizations and argue that patriarchy has "blotted out" women's progress and their intellectual, political and cultural contributions (Gillett 1989:201).

Approaches to leadership and social relations of gender entrenched a male culture in organizations by ignoring women either by making the assumption that all leaders were males or assuming a gender-free position (Adler, Laney and Packer 1993; Ozga 1993). Studies by Coleman (2001), Ayman (1993), Chisholm (2001) and a report by Ord (2002) are quoted in the following analysis of culture and leadership perception to highlight the difficulties women in leadership positions experienced as a result of the masculine character that permeates organisations. This is observed across developing and developed countries.

Coleman (2001) in her study of female secondary head teachers in England and Wales identified that a predominantly male culture was a factor that females had to contend with in making their career progress in secondary schools. Mac and Ghaill (in Coleman 2001) identify the "power of masculinity as an institutional force, operating to marginalize and exclude women" (ibid, p. 84). This masculine culture was experienced in the selection process where women were perceived to be incapable of projecting authority at an assembly in the disciplining of boys. The cultural stereotype that identifies women with

the caring and pastoral roles served to exclude them from leadership. This was as a result of the difficulty male selectors had in overcoming the stereotype that links women with the home and family.

Ayman (1993) in her review of literature focuses on the role of social and cultural perceptions in understanding leadership. Drawing on the literature in gender studies and cross-cultural psychology, she demonstrates that the typical stereotype for women include nurturing, compassionate and considerate characteristics, but women are also stereotyped as weak and not equal to men and unimportant. Such an argument only served to strengthen hierarchical authority. Being considerate and supportive was viewed as a sign of weakness in females, although a supportive and participative leader is viewed as effective. Hence, women as leaders are confronted with two conflicting expectations of how she is to behave – one of being a women and the other of being a leader. In her leadership role she has to continually decide which one of these identities is more important. The social and cultural factors contributed to women being “caught in a bind of not fitting their prescribed gender role if they assumed too ‘masculine’ characteristics and of being ‘too feminine’ if they did not” (Blackmore 1999:46).

In the South African context race, rather than culture, and gender are integrated. Chisholm (2001) in her study on gender and leadership in South Africa examined the transformation of educational administration at leadership levels made possible by new legislation for social and gender equity. The Gender Equity Act (1996) facilitated the entry of women into “previously all-male domains of educational bureaucracy” (Chisholm 2001:387). However together with transformation was evident the entrenching of old existing patriarchal forms of control. This phenomenon can be attributed to approaches and practices of leadership and competence that aligns itself to the notion of masculinity, rationality and whiteness. This study by Chisholm of the Gauteng Department of Education saw the promotion of women to senior positions, but these women left within six weeks only to be replaced by men. The findings revealed that discourses of leadership based on race and gender impacted on the experience and identity of both men and women. Whilst the women experienced race and gender as shaping their work, the men in the study noted colour to have a stronger influence. The

participants framed their discussions of themselves and leadership in terms of a dominant ideology of leadership as being white, male, middle class and heterosexual. In this view weak leadership implied being black and incompetent. Together with these racial overtones good leadership was also associated with “masculinity, control and performance” (p.389). The black women in the study resorted to views of “maternal feminism” (p.389) that embodied an ethic of care and women’s experience as mothers. This view stood in contrast to the dominant notion of control and competence. Women in this department negotiated their leadership terrain by focusing on leadership qualities and styles viewed as feminine and natural. They viewed themselves and other women leaders as being more empathetic, collaborative, supportive, and focusing on team building and democratic styles of leadership. However, the challenges and difficulties experienced by these women in terms of acceptance of authority, visibility and recognition influenced them to move out of leadership positions. Black women felt that their authority was undermined because they were black and female, whereas white women experienced race as an issue in the lack of acceptance of their authority especially by older black men. The added domestic responsibility of women also constrained them from participating fully in leadership roles. It would then be logical to assume that men would be more successful at good leadership since domestic responsibility is still seen as the job of women. These findings reinforce the view that educational leadership is still the sole preserve of men and therefore a masculinist enterprise.

Booyesen (as reported by Ord 2002), in her review of challenges facing black and white women managers in South Africa, concurs with Chisholm when she points out that South African society is still based on and judged by white male values and criteria. She adds further that “the white male paradigm of management still forms the basis of most management and leadership training and development in the country” (p. 4). Despite efforts to promote women to leadership positions, women who achieve these positions experience difficulties as they are hampered by prevailing perceptions about their leadership styles, abilities and values. Booyesen further comments that the lack of female role models and mentors militates against acceptance of a female, as opposed to male leadership styles. Women are exposed to a constantly reinforced message that they could be successful only if they become more assertive, competitive and dressed for success.

Booyesen states that new female values and leadership styles which draws on skills and attitudes developed from shared experiences as women are appropriate to managing and leading the diverse workforce in South Africa promoting transformation, empowerment and tolerance. Present day schools, as organizations are flatter structures where power is devolved amongst all role players, emphasizing the need for flexibility, networking, teamwork, trust and information sharing. "The feminine approach to leadership is actually in line with the democratisation of the workplace as we move towards more horizontal organizations and the empowerment of the workforce"(Booyesen 2002:4). She argues that leadership curricula biased towards the white male leadership style should be revised to be more inclusive of diversity.

The conflation of race and culture will have implications for equity and transformation in South Africa. For women to gain entry into leadership positions and succeed, approaches of leadership need to incorporate the alternatives that would address the bias that exists in organizational culture for any real transformation and equity to take place. Differences and relationships between men and women serve to create social meaning and a one-sided view will only hinder women as individuals in articulating and achieving with their personal styles because dominant culture highlights masculine views of leadership.

Further, as a result of social and technological changes, the nature of work has undergone changes, which blur the boundaries created by cultural definitions. The cultural definition that categorizes men as the hunters and trappers and women as the gatherers and preparers of food no longer exists since there are few occupations relegated entirely to one sex. In this period of transition, cultural support is diminishing for maintaining sex differences in leadership. Furthermore, equal employment opportunities decreases cultural support for maintaining different attitudes, beliefs and values about women as leaders. The leader is now seen as a person who is innovative, alert, a risk taker, progressive, tactful and impressive. (Kraisonswasdi 1989:7).

2.5 Approaches to Leadership

Educational leadership is a complex and changing concept and therefore cannot possibly be explained by a single all-embracing approach to management and leadership.

Management and leadership are the central aspects of school life, and one without the other will not be enough to ensure success at schools. It is therefore necessary to explain the relationship between educational leadership and management. Leadership is viewed as the art of facilitating, guiding and inspiring while managing is about getting things done efficiently and effectively (Davidoff and Lazarus 2002). Management focuses on the accomplishment of desired objectives by ensuring an environment that is favourable to performance by people working in organised groups. Leadership is concerned with the interests, wishes and welfare of the followers with the aim of achieving a sense of togetherness and teamwork (Bush 1995). Schools principals serve as leaders and managers as they are involved in negotiating resources and demands in order to cope with the challenges in their schools. The focus of this study is on leadership rather than on management since effective leaders are able to obtain the co-operation of other people in the organization and to harness the resources towards the attainment of goals set. This process of leading is dependent on the qualities the leader exhibits to suit the demands of the situation. This then makes the notion that there is one best way to approach a challenge, obsolete.

Shakeshaft (1987) in her analysis of research and approaches to leadership in educational administration illustrates how women have been left out of the framework of organizational theory. She argues that gender as a factor was ignored in developing approaches to leadership and administration. By overlooking gender Shakeshaft (1987) states that the underlying assumption being made is that male and female experiences have no differences, therefore researching males, will also enable generalizations of female experience. She therefore contends that “concepts in organizational theory create imprecise, inaccurate and imbalanced scholarship” (p. 150) as the world of women was not studied or ignored when the experience was different. Approaches to leadership have been constructed on experience and knowledge as viewed by men. Most approaches were

based on the corporate world and the military, both environments dominated by males, as such gender was not considered.

In order to address the absence of female experience in the generation of knowledge the aim of feminist scholarship was to challenge the patriarchal nature of power and discriminatory practices. Feminists argued that women should be studied by themselves and be seen by others as capable of making meaning in the world. Feminist perspectives of leadership focus on power and the rules by which it is distributed. The concern for feminists was the use of gender as a criterion for determining superiority and subordination. Women were assigned to subordinate roles because they are women and therefore suffer gender oppression. Feminists criticized the patriarchal concept of leadership and power “where power is bound to mean domination” and as such served to discourage women from aspiring to leadership positions (Cockburn 1991:241).

The concept and approaches to leadership has undergone changes from the earliest assumption that leadership is automatically bestowed on an individual on the basis of certain characteristics referred to as the trait approach, to the situational and contingency approach that proposes the notion that effective leadership behaviour is dependent on the situation, to the more contemporary perspective of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are said to inspire and empower people to translate a vision into reality. An overview of these approaches follow next.

2.5.1 The Trait Approach to Leadership

The *trait approach* (Grobler, 1993; Bass, 1990) postulates the notion that leaders were born and not made. Their inborn personal qualities enable them to inspire people when they speak, or they have a vision that makes people want to follow them. It focuses on individual leaders and attempts to determine the personal traits that great leaders share. The most common traits that differentiate leaders from followers have been identified as:

- intelligence,
- better adjusted psychologically,

- display better judgement,
- interact more, are forceful, aggressive, independent and self –confident.

This approach has been labelled the “Great Man Theory” and these qualities and characteristics are usually attributed to men. History, according to Bass (1990) was shaped by the leadership of great men, such as Winston Churchill and Thomas Jefferson. Leadership greatness became the monopoly of the male sex. Despite the presence of great women in history, such as Joan of Arc, Catherine the Great and Golda Meir, the trait approach ignored great women.

In the *trait approach*, leadership is vested in the person at the apex of the hierarchy. Leading then assumes a bureaucratic process and the authority of leaders is a product of their official position. A weakness of this approach is its focus on the organisation as an entity and ignoring or underestimating the contribution of individuals. This approach assumes that the behaviour of people in the organisation is a result of the positions they occupy, rather than their individual qualities and experience (Bush 2003). In secondary schools where professionals specialize in subject specific fields, the ability of leaders to direct the actions of subordinates may not always be possible and could result in conflict. For example, a leader who is a humanities graduate will be lacking in the science and mathematics faculty leading to tension and conflict between the authority of expertise of the educator and the positional authority of the leader.

2.5.2 *Leadership Behaviour*

The *trait approach* proved to be inadequate to identify leaders since there are certain personal characteristics that can be altered. For example, voice, facial features and physical attributes of strength, knowledge and intelligence can be improved through training and development. This led to a waning of interest in the trait approach and a growing emphasis in research on the behaviour of leaders and under what conditions one approach to leadership provided effective results. This approach attempted to understand leadership by comparing the behaviours of effective and ineffective leaders and to assess how successful leaders behave. The focus thus moved from what leaders are (traits) to

what leaders did on the job. The following studies which focus on leadership behaviour will be discussed: the Iowa Studies, the Ohio State Studies, the Michigan Studies, the Blake and Mouton and Reddin's grid (Grobler 1993; Bass 1990; Van der Westhuizen 1991; Massie and Douglas 1992).

The Iowa Studies (Grobler 1993) categorized leadership in three different types in keeping with the leaders style of decision-making. *Authoritarian* leaders were very directive and allowed no participation taking full responsibility for the task to be completed. This type of approach created aggression and apathy and lowered satisfaction on the part of subordinates. *Democratic* leaders encouraged group discussion and decision-making. The democratic approach to leadership provides staff with the opportunity to make original and creative contributions. The leader also makes an effort to create positive interpersonal relationships, which harmonise the efforts of the group. Leaders who were described as *laissez-faire* gave complete freedom to the group, which often resulted in chaos.

The *Ohio State Studies* (Bass 1990) interest was in identifying leader behaviours that were important for achieving the goals of the group as well as the organization. From the responses to a Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire two positive dimensions that enabled leadership were identified. One was *consideration* where the leader engaged in social behaviour by showing concern for the feelings and ideas of subordinates. The other was *initiating structure* that represented the extent to which a leader emphasized organizational performance goals, defined tasks, established channels of communication and evaluated work performance.

The *Michigan Studies* (Massie & Douglas 1992) also developed a two-dimension description of leadership behaviour similar to the Ohio Studies. They compared the behaviour of effective and ineffective supervisors and labelled their two dimensions as *employee-centred* and *production-centred*. The employee-centred leader placed emphasis on the development of work teams and interpersonal relations while the production centred leader emphasized employee tasks and means of attaining them. The Michigan and Ohio Studies revealed that leadership focusing on two dimensions ignored situational

factors, individual differences and did not consider the aspirations of members of the group. The aim of the leader was to get members to complete tasks. Whilst the leadership showed respect for the feelings and ideas of staff members and could therefore be seen as democratic, the leader used power to increase productivity.

These approaches were based on the occupational roles of men in charge of formal organizations. Leadership was defined in terms of the behaviour of men who headed these organizations and did not take into account gender, which is an integral aspect of human interaction.

The focus on leadership behaviour saw the emergence of leadership grids consisting of basic behavioural patterns that could be repeated and successfully used in different situations. The *Blake and Mouton* and *Reddin's grids* (Van der Westhuizen 1991) focus on concern for production and a concern for people based on the assumption that one best style of leadership would suit all situations. This approach then inferred that although situations are different, the same leader and follower behaviour could work in any situation. Such an assumption made little room for creativity. According to Grobler (1993) these grids catered for four basic approaches to leadership viz. related, integrated, separated and dedicated and to match specific situations with specific approaches to maximise effectiveness is a complex process. For example, the technological demands of secondary schools will require a dedicated approach which is task driven, but the human and organisational demands will need an integrated approach which is relationship oriented.

2.5.3 Situational and Contingency Approaches

The situational and contingency approaches (Grobler 1993; Bass 1990) are based on the premise that the performance of a group or organization is contingent not only on the leader but also on the situation. This approach was an effort to examine how the leadership situation affects the leader and the group, a dilemma that the trait and behavioural approaches failed to resolve in trying to fit one best set of leadership style for

all situations. According to this approach, effective leadership depends on the interaction of the following:

- the leaders personal traits;
- the leaders behaviour, and
- factors in the leadership situation

This approach implies that effective leadership cannot be clarified by a single factor.

This review will focus attention on two of the contingency approaches, namely: *Fiedler's Contingency Approach* and *The Path-Goal Approach*.

One of the first researchers to study the interaction of the leader-follower relations, the task structure and the position of power the leader occupied was Fred Fiedler (1993). According to this approach of leadership the effectiveness of a leader in achieving high group performance is dependent on the leader's motivational system and the degree to which the leader controls and influences the situation. Two leadership styles were identified in the contingency approach namely, task-motivated leadership and relationship-motivated leadership. The task-motivated leader's first priority is production-centred and the achievements of tasks while relationship-motivated leaders place emphasize on good interpersonal relationships. Fiedler arrived at his definition of leadership from the male dominated world of business and the military. Although females participated in this study, the importance of gender to this approach was overlooked as an issue. In a further study to measure leadership style it was revealed that older females and younger men and women had common perceptions with one another than they did with older male colleagues. However, Fiedler was of the view that women were illogical in their reasoning, insincere, had a tendency to make hasty judgements and considered them frail (Shakeshaft: 1987). This view of women makes it clear that in the conceptualisation of approaches female behaviour was pathologised. The masculine bias of Fiedler's theory assumed that women were incapable of making decisions that mattered.

The *Path-Goal Approach* (Massie and Douglas 1992) was an attempt to explain the impact of leadership behaviour on variables such as subordinate motivation, satisfaction,

effort and performance as moderated by situational factors and the work environment. The basis of this approach is the belief that leaders should use their authority in the initiating structure and consideration areas in order to clarify both the goals and the paths that lead to rewards available to the followers. This approach identified four leadership styles to focus on both goals and goal paths namely, directive leadership, supportive leadership, participative leadership and achievement oriented leadership. Many variables exist in the school situation therefore each type of leader behaviour will work well in some situations but not in others. Further the leader behaviour will only serve to motivate if it is capable of controlling the rewards that the subordinates value. For example, educators at schools value salary increases and they are now aware of the integrated quality management system. Principals at schools are in a position to recommend this pay progression based on the performance of educators. This approach makes the leader powerful, but this power can be used to manipulate subordinates, since the focus is on the accomplishment of tasks. Although the leader shows concern for the welfare and needs of subordinates and the leadership behaviour is viewed as adaptable the approach assumes that only the leader can motivate and could therefore lead to subordinates relying to heavily on the leader.

Approaches that form the basis of educational leadership focused on male behaviour. Power has been traditionally conceptualised from a masculine viewpoint, thereby linking gender to power. Traditional roles and stereotypes ensured that women earned only less than equal positions in organizations. It is often observed that female leaders have to take notes at meetings and get the coffee. The cultural and historical meanings attached to masculinity and femininity are reproduced in leadership positions in organizations (Hall 1996). This situation ensures that a man is at the helm, in power and command of institutions thereby entrenching male traits, attitudes, values and beliefs. The assessment of women was made against standards set by males.

An important quality of the school environment being predominantly female workplaces is not taken into account in these approaches, which are developed, from a male perspective. As such it has been argued that “concepts emerging solely from a male consciousness may be irrelevant for the female experience and inadequate for explaining

female behaviour” (Shakeshaft 1987:149). That is the issue of the gender of leaders and followers needs to be considered in leadership approaches.

2.5.4 Transactional Leadership

Leadership is a social process but the trait, contingency and leadership behaviour approaches overlooked the key aspect of the relationship between people. Transactional models of leadership are the result of a social exchange between leaders and followers. This model suggests that the leader gives benefits to followers such as direction, vision recognition and other esteem needs and followers respond to the expectations of the leader. The transactional view then suggests that the leader will react favourably to high rather than low- performing followers (Bass 1990). In order to be effective and achieve outcomes favourable relational qualities must exist between followers and leaders. Transactional leaders motivate followers’ performance by offering an incentive that satisfies the self-interest of the followers.

Transactional leaders contribute to the exchange with followers by providing information on what needs to be done and how well a task is done and thereby acts as models for their subordinates. The patterns of interaction are characteristic of a “top-down” leadership with structures to ensure higher follower performance. However, it could also lead to followers ingratiating themselves to the leader in order to gain certain rewards and increase their esteem in the eyes of the leader. Such compliance could result in a lack of creativity and superficial actions in order to achieve rewards. This approach could serve to limit members in an organization as “followers may come to depend on their leaders view of reality as their prime source of information and expectations” (Bass 1990:342)

2.5.5 Transformational Leadership

In contrast to the earlier approaches, contemporary thinking about leadership contends that leaders are not mere bureaucratic power-wielders but rather work with followers in ways that change both the leaders and followers to function at higher levels over time.

This view of leadership is referred to as transforming leadership. This approach was conceptualised by James Mac Gregor Burns (1978). Although this approach seems old it has gained prominence in recent times as a capacity for leadership emerges as the central requirement to change schools as social systems. The current challenge for educational leaders in the new democratic South Africa is to engage others in a commitment to change rather than merely maintaining the status quo of an organisation.

Burns (1978:20) maintains that transformational leaders change “the outlook and behaviour of followers”. Transformational leaders therefore motivate followers not out of desire stemming from selfish needs but rather the common goals and needs of the organization. These leaders are viewed with trust and respect and having an attainable mission and vision. The transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to increase awareness of mutual efforts and encourages inquiry in ways of doing things. Members in the organization are supported for questioning their own as well as the leader’s values, beliefs and expectations.

This approach then will be able to address challenges as creative ways to lead the organization, will develop. The transformational leader treats followers differently but equally, giving each individual consideration in order to provide learning opportunities when delegating tasks. In this way the leader provides differential development needs to members of the organization. “The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (Owens 1995:126).

Leaders in South African schools have an important role to play in transformation by bringing people together and motivating them so that there will exist a genuine sharing of mutual needs, aspirations and values. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) maintain that the inspirational aspect of transformational leadership can certainly assist in transcending the fears and anxieties common in an unstable scenario of educational reform and change and in a healthy school environment the leadership capacity must be developed in all staff members, through ongoing personal and professional development. Effective leadership can therefore transform the culture of a school and the manner in which the leader and

educators relate to each other. According to Owens (1995:128) “the vehicle for bringing about such transformation is a vision of the future that is better, more desirable, more compelling, and more personally fulfilling than the reality of the present time”.

Grobler (1993) states that transformational leaders generate excitement, because they are charismatic, ensure that members receive individualized attention by delegating challenging work, increase their responsibilities, keep lines of communication open and provide mentoring for development. Moreover, they are viewed as intellectually stimulating since they arouse the imagination and generate insight into difficult problems. This approach to leadership transforms the roles of both followers and leaders so that they become interdependent which results in their aspirations, motives and values merging in their commitment to achieve common goals.

MacBeath (1998) suggests good transformational leaders are more likely to be female because they possess attributes such as being more democratic, less hierarchical, better at dealing with conflict, supportive of educators and show more concern for the social and emotional development of learners. Shakeshaft (1987) and Adler et al (1993) tend to agree on attributes of female leadership such as being more democratic, less hierarchical, better at managing conflict and being supportive of educators and parents.

Leadership in apartheid South Africa was characterized by extreme authoritarianism, as schools had to reflect the ideology of the state. This however is changing as a result of the new democratic South African government’s introduction of laws and policies to address and transform education. The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 creates a new approach to leading and governing schools. This Act introduces the involvement of the principal, the School Management Team and the School Governing Body (representing the parent component) to work together in a collaborative manner in developing an efficient and effective school environment. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution of South Africa expects schools to operate with values such as human dignity, freedom and justice, democracy and equality. The role of the principal as the leader is to provide opportunities for educators, learners and parents to participate in running schools. The new education policies challenges school leaders to work in democratic and participatory

ways and to adopt an ethic of caring and nurturing regardless of race, class or gender. Hence, “transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader” (Bass, 1990:54).

2.6 Women and Leadership

From the above discussion on approaches to leadership women were not considered in earlier conceptions of leadership. However in recent years studies are beginning to focus on women. In this section I review firstly international developments on women in leadership and then focus on some South African studies.

2.6.1 An International Perspective

The question about whether successful women behave in the same way as successful men has raised much discussion. Rosener (1995) in her book reports that women executives in the corporate world use different leadership styles from men. Men were more inclined to use personal power, making decisions and issuing orders on the assumption that people were motivated by personal self interest while women were more personal in style, showing sensitivity to the feelings of others, sharing information, empowering and motivating people to commit themselves to the ideals of the organization. This difference in leadership was ascribed to gender rather than the personality of the female leaders. Women leaders encouraged participation and facilitated inclusion, making people feel important. She concludes that the participative, empowering leadership style that women prefer to use is more effective. The reason for the different approach was due to the ways in which males and females are socialized in society.

Hall (1996) in her study examined the views women in leadership had about power. She reports that the confidence in their own beliefs and values “enabled them to reject management as masculine and power as inevitably political” (p.145). Their interactions reflected their preference for shared instead of autocratic power. They used power as an enabling aspect and believed in giving up some control, encouraging self-expression and demonstrating commitment.

Shakeshaft (1987) reports that women give more attention to individual differences care more and spend more time with people. They also have greater knowledge about the curriculum and create orderly, safer and quieter learning environments. Further, they maintain a closely-knit organization by being democratic and adopting a participatory style. The environment of the female world is viewed as different since their leadership and decision-making style create a “feminine culture” (Shakeshaft 1987:177).

Watts (1998) in her case studies of three headmistresses of girls’ secondary schools investigated their professional identity and leadership styles. She concludes that much of their ideals of self-discipline, corporate virtues and self-realization were based on the boys’ public schools. Although this model was not slavishly followed, it was their only model. They therefore to some extent copied their role models, who were headmasters of public grammar schools. They merged their internal opinion of ‘proper’ female conduct with their assumption of ‘masculine’ management. Their views were limited by what they thought women should do, rather than what they could do.

Coleman (2000) in her analysis of female principals’ leadership and management styles in England and Wales states that certain qualities are identified with a ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ style of management. Men and women may adopt both of these styles although the expectation is that men might adopt a style that is predominantly masculine and a woman one that is predominantly feminine. In her study the most popular style of management was termed collaborative and adjectives indicating this style were most often chosen from the female paradigm, for example, aware of individual differences, caring, intuitive and tolerant.

2.6.2 A South African Perspective

In South Africa the focus of government is to entrench equality and undo the imbalances of the past. The Department of Education established a Gender Equity Task Team in an effort to redress issues relating to gender and education. A number of studies focus on women in educational leadership, namely Dhlamini (1996), Shayi (1996), Africa (1997),

Malematsa (1998), Mwingi (1999), Ngcobo (1999), Udjombala (2002) and Kganye (2002). For the purpose of this study, research by Ngcobo (1999), Shayi (1996), Africa (1997), Kganye (2002) and Udjombala (2002) will be reviewed.

Ngcobo (1999) in her study reflected on the bias, which tends to reinforce the acceptance of male leadership and makes it difficult for women to enter and gain acceptance in management positions. Her research reveals that women remain rare commodities in management in secondary schools but they are concentrated in lower levels as principals of primary and pre-primary schools. She also examined socialization and the ideology of apartheid in reinforcing the self-image and inferiority of women. In Ngcobo's review and research on women in management positions in education she reflects on inter-related conceptual models adapted from the social sciences and used to explain the root causes of the under representation of women in senior management positions. One of the models seeks to explain gender issues in management by assuming that people are promoted according to their ability. It therefore implies that men are promoted to the highest positions because of their competency and qualification and women are not because they are deemed less able. Leadership theories therefore maybe problematic and inadequate for explaining female experience and under representation in male dominated spheres of leadership. She also examined the different ways in which boys and girls are socialized and her research findings reveal that competent women are often discriminated against because they are viewed as a threat by males in the organization.

Shayi (1996) in her research on external and internal barriers faced by black female principals in the Eastern and Western Cape regions points out unique barriers such as sex-role stereotyping, low self esteem and lack of self-confidence, lack of role models and support systems, marital status and family impede women's progress in their careers. The findings in her research suggest that the perception in the teaching profession was congruent with the views society had about females. Teaching was perceived as a female profession based on the philosophy that women are naturally inclined to care for children. However qualities that were accepted as effective for the nurturing of young children

were not accepted as effective for leadership. Patriarchal and bureaucratic socialization discriminated against women in attaining leadership positions.

Africa (1997) in her research investigates the representation of females in leadership roles in secondary schools in Mitchell's Plain. The majority of women participants of her research saw socialization and discriminatory practices in the appointment and promotion process as factors that limited the career opportunities of women. Skills associated with headship were also identified by female participants as barriers to advancement in their careers. These skills were: "the perceived inability to be a disciplinarian; the perceived inability to foster sound interpersonal relationships; the perceived inability to exercise control and to take decisions" (Africa 1997:viii). Stereotypical perceptions of women therefore perpetuated the view that women were inadequate or not competent to serve as leaders. This then hindered their advancement to principalship.

Kganye's (2002) research on educators' perceptions about effective principals in secondary schools focuses on the different leadership styles used by principals. She also reflects on the challenges she experienced as a deputy principal and principal as a result of political transition, perceptions, beliefs and cultural values. Her study showed that principals who preferred a democratic approach to leadership were perceived to be effective principals.

Udjombala's (2002) study explores the practical experience of women in leadership. The principals in her study are reported to prefer a participative approach to leadership, which was characterised by teamwork, collaboration and collegiality. From her study it would appear that the women principals focussed on good interpersonal relationships as a strategy to build mutual trust and respect.

The emphasis in South Africa has been on the barriers and perceptions that prevented females from being promoted to leadership and on African females, but not much is known about how women themselves characterise their approach to leadership, which is the focus of this study.

2.7 Vision, Values and Beliefs

Leadership tends to be equated with vision, values and beliefs (Coleman 2003). The manner in which vision is communicated implies much about the nature of leadership. Schools as organizations develop positive identities through a clear vision and sense of purpose. This vision is the particular way in which the school perceives itself to be making a meaningful contribution towards society. The vision that leaders share with followers is constantly reviewed as a result of changing values and new developments. Leaders play a vital role in articulating a vision that describes a better future. The essence of a meaningful vision is that every member feels a sense of ownership of the vision and participates with enthusiasm in accomplishing it. According to Owens (1995) “the vision of a leader is always uplifting, pointing to new directions, calling for progress from where we are and where we are going” which brings members together in overcoming obstacles and working towards a common goal and a shared future.

Educational leaders will have to articulate this vision with its values and beliefs in order to deal with differences in our multicultural schools and thereby gain consensus on a new and better future. The vision then serves as a vehicle for the empowerment of educators since it facilitates a mutual process uniting all members of an organization in a common goal. Vision building is an open, ongoing and collaborative process that ensures personal self-development on the part of the leader as well as the followers. The school moreover will not stagnate as the vision will evolve according to assumptions, beliefs and values being based on reality and the current needs of the school. According to Strachan, “educational leadership is an activity that involves relating to others on an intimate level. It involves the sharing of values and beliefs” (1993:79).

Leaders who make personal sacrifices and take risks demonstrate their own courage and conviction in the values and the vision and in so doing earn respect and credibility as role models. In order to create a mutually shared vision leaders today have to share some of

the power and create an environment of trust and open communication so as to ensure collaboration and empowerment of all role-players. To bring about change and transformation, leaders at school have to ensure that all members exemplify values that contribute to the school functioning effectively. Collaboration, shared goals, respect, responsibility are some qualities necessary for the smooth functioning of schools.

2.8 Decision-Making

A key feature of any leadership is decision-making. The way a principal organizes the school is largely dependent on the decision-making structures and procedures. These structures and procedures are concerned with who makes what decisions and at what level and how these decisions are made. The Education White Papers of 1995 and 1996 (Department of Education) focuses on democratic practices in the organization of schools. Decision-making processes will relate directly to issues of power, control and responsibility and therefore the leader of the organization. In order to build a democratic school, principals will have to ensure democratic decision-making structures, which involve maximum participation.

An involvement of all role-players will augur well for the school since it is a way of empowering people to take control of their lives and develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of the decisions taken. Thus mutual responsibilities will be fulfilled through a sense of commitment to the realization of shared goals. Shared decision-making leads to the development of trust and openness, which is necessary in order to ensure the growth and effectiveness of an organization. Women as leaders value shared decisions and resort to cooperative strategies in order to reach their goals (Shakeshaft 1987). They prefer to be inclusive so that staff members are more aware of and committed to the goals of the school. Rosener (cited in MacBeath 1998) states that the participative, cooperative, emotional and supportive style of leadership is an extension of feminisation. Women therefore are able to respond to the complexities of decision-making and change by adopting a range of different leadership styles. In the

process of decision-making women leaders were described as “decisive and strategic, but also dogged and humble” (MacBeath 1998:29).

2.9 Conclusion

“Leadership is an art. It is a way of being in the world, which is flowing and caring, harmonizing, warming, opening and challenging. Good leadership and management inspires and touches, holds and cherishes, is humble and certain, pushes and directs, waits and listens, notices, moves, contains, breaks through senses the moment... and rests.”

(Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:166)

The new system of education in South Africa emphasizes equal access and improving the quality of education that a school delivers. The leadership style of the school principal is of utmost importance in determining the quality of the teaching-learning climate of the school. The principal as the person in authority is central to the entire activity of establishing an effective and healthy environment. Effective leaders need to have vision and imagination. They must also be passionate and committed to service delivery at their schools.

The ability to be decisive is an indication of an effective leader’s self-confidence. This quality will engender trust between the leader and her followers. Being decisive is also an indication that a good leader is able to think through issues in strategic terms as a result of clear objectives that are borne in mind. However, such a leader is also perceptive to the needs and emotions of people around him and hence knows when to confront a situation or leave it to go unchallenged. This then means that the leader has to have the ability to listen attentively and have astute observational skills.

In order to be able to make informed judgements a good leader has to have the ability to assess and differentiate situations so as to deal with them accordingly. This will call for intelligence and wisdom from which a leader can extract a multitude of responses appropriate for that particular situation. This then requires that the leader be flexible and adaptable so as to be guided by wisdom and intuition instead of being rigid.

The ability to work in a collaborative manner will call for a leader to be a good delegator and judge of what people are able to achieve. This quality will ensure that educators are not frustrated with tasks they experience as unreasonable and unrealistic. The personality and values of the leader has an impact on the school as a whole. So the leader has to display honesty and authenticity. Such a leader will enjoy the support and trust of people as she shows genuine caring and empathy. A true leader is always willing to change in order to espouse values and best practices and bases his actions on morality and integrity.

Effective leadership has to accommodate change since schools as dynamic educational and cultural institutions are characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty, conflicting goals and fluid participation. A culture of teaching and learning would be hampered if the environment was totally bureaucratic. I believe it would therefore be to the leader's advantage to adopt many approaches in order to accommodate the school's prevailing culture, values, traditions, laws and policies and norms of acceptable behaviour established over time. In order to transform schools I believe that shared leadership and collaboration is a more effective approach because it empowers individuals in the organisation, builds trust and reflects the shared aims and values of the group members.

The focus of this study is to investigate the approach of women principals in school leadership. Literature claims that women as leaders have a different kind of behaviour to that of men which they bring to the exercise of leadership functions (Faulstich-Wieland 1997). Research in the main has focussed on the personal experiences of women in an effort to understand their leadership. It would be worthwhile to expand our knowledge and understanding of women as school leaders and the strategies they adopt in a male-oriented domain.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The focus of my study is to investigate the leadership styles of women principals in secondary schools with the aim of arriving at an understanding of how woman principals interpret their role and experiences as leaders. This chapter is concerned with the methods and procedures applied in collecting data in this study. In order to gather sufficient data both the qualitative and quantitative approaches are engaged to provide insight into the critical questions. The population consists of all secondary school principals in the province of KwaZulu – Natal. In order to arrive at an understanding of the leadership styles of women principals a questionnaire was sent to all women principals in KwaZulu – Natal and to deepen this understanding semi – structured interviews were conducted with four female principals as part of the research strategy.

The questionnaire addressed primarily the first research question of what leadership approaches do secondary school women principals in KwaZulu - Natal claim to exhibit? That is how do they characterise their own leadership style and approach.

The interviews attempted to establish why particular approaches are favoured by women principals. The reasons and explanations for a particular approach are then elicited.

These questions are intended to shed some light in the ways in which women as leaders construct their identities and execute their responsibilities in roles that are viewed to be the preserve of men. Further, the new principles for a democratic education system challenges principals to keep in mind values such as equality, human dignity, freedom and justice. These questions will also assist in understanding how females as principals are coping with transformation in post apartheid South Africa.

3.2 Multi-method Research Approaches

Guba and Lincoln define a paradigm as:

“the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (1998:195).

A paradigm is a set of basic beliefs representing a worldview that shapes the nature of the world, the individual's place in it and the many possible relationships to that world.

This belief system serves as a guide for the researcher to understand the form and nature of reality and the relationship between the researcher and the subject being studied. It also assists the researcher in the choice of method to be used.

Emphasis in quantification in science was initially the accepted method of inquiry because of the assumption that “only quantitative data are ultimately valid or of high quality” (Guba and Lincoln 1998:196). Qualitative research uses a variety of methods to study things in their natural settings and tries to make sense of, or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them.)

The use of a wide range or inter-connected methods of triangulation e.g. case study, personal experience and interviews assists the researcher towards an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. According to Anderson and Herr (1999:12) “The notion of triangulation, or the inclusion of multiple perspectives guards against viewing events in a simplistic or self – serving way”. The use of questionnaires and semi – structured interviews in this study serve as complementary research designs where one approach served to inform and guide the other. The questionnaire afforded the opportunity of reaching all women principals throughout the province of KwaZulu – Natal and served to add scope and breadth to the study. The interview also attempted to investigate how the respondents made sense of the ways gender constructed their worlds as woman principals.

The assumptions and complementary nature of the qualitative and quantitative approach used in this study will be briefly discussed.

Quantitative research views reality as objective and can be measured independently of the researcher by using a questionnaire. The questionnaire provided insights and information on leadership from the perspective of the respondents. Qualitative research, however, asserts “the only reality is that constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation” (Cresswell 1994:4). Reality is then subjective and multiple as experienced by the participants being researched namely women principals in secondary schools. The qualitative approach, via interviews, enabled me to engage in an in-depth study of the leadership experience of woman principals.

The quantitative approach provides the view that the researcher should remain independent of the subject of the study. This allows the researcher to control bias and provide an objective assessment of the situation. The use of the questionnaire in this study allowed for an objective and unbiased report of the leadership styles of women principals. The qualitative approach holds the stance that the researcher interacts with the participants of the study, which was provided by the use of the semi-structured interviews. As a woman deputy principal I was to some extent an insider to the study. The women principals may have been more candid and frank in their responses.

According to Cresswell (1994) the values of the researcher are kept out of a quantitative study. The qualitative researcher, however, admits the value – laden nature of the study and reports personal values and biases. The questionnaire ensured that the principals were not influenced directly by the researcher’s presence but the semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to probe the responses of the women principals in terms of my personal values and experiences as a senior member of management at a combined school.

The quantitative researcher uses language, which is impersonal and formal and this was accomplished by the use of questionnaire. In a qualitative study the language is personal

and informal in order to gain meaning and understanding of the participant. The semi-structured interview provided this approach.

Quantitative methodology focuses on a deductive form of logic. Cresswell (1994:7) states, “The intent of the study is to develop generalizations that contribute to the theory.” This approach was provided by means of the questionnaire. The emphasis in the qualitative method is on inductive logic gained from studying the participants in order to explain the phenomena as was allowed for by the semi-structured interview.

The use of both approaches serve as complementary methods as it assists in generating information for a better understanding of the concept of leadership amongst woman principals that can be generalized but also generates explanations for deeper conceptual understanding of leadership for women through individual interviews.

3.3 The Questionnaire

Given the relatively low number of women principals in secondary, women principals throughout the province of KwaZulu- Natal were targeted through a detailed questionnaire to collect data (Appendix I). Targeting all principals in KwaZulu-Natal attempted to obtain an overview for the entire province of women principals’ espoused leadership styles. The rationale for using the questionnaire as a research strategy to gather data was that the entire population could be accessed in a short time. Questionnaires also ensure uniformity in the data gathering process as each respondent reacts to exactly the same questions. The drawback of questionnaires is that the different interpretations of questions by the respondents cannot be monitored and there is no certainty that all questions will be answered.

3.4 Women Principals in KwaZulu Natal

The department of Education and Culture was reluctant in providing statistics for the purposes of this research upon receipt of my initial request. A telephonic conversation with a departmental official yielded the response that there was a “blanket ban” on the dissemination of any statistics owing to the problems experienced with the various

teacher unions who viewed the statistics as being incomplete and incorrect. Subsequently an interview with the head of the EMIS section was granted. This interview provided statistics for the year 2002 only as the statistics for the year 2003 were in the process of being updated.

The data provided indicate that the population of woman principals in secondary schools in the four regions comprise 179 in total.

Region	No. Of High Schools	No. Headed by Women
Ethekwini	394	56
Pietermaritzburg	338	39
Ukhahlamba	262	26
Zululand	502	58
Total	1496	179

Data Source 2002 Provided by Education Management Information Systems
KZN- Department of Education and Culture

From the above statistics provided by the Department of Education there is a strong indication that women are under-represented in management at secondary schools as they make up only 11.96 % (179) of the total percentage of principals in the province of KwaZulu Natal, which has a total of 1496 secondary schools.

3.5 Administering the Questionnaire

Questionnaires were sent via post with a letter (in appendix) explaining the rationale and purpose of the study, emphasizing the relevance of the research topic and a willingness to share the results of the study. Postal surveys provide the respondents the possibility of anonymity and the possibility of bias towards the interviewer is eliminated, the chances are that such questionnaires will be completed honestly. It was also convenient and

economical since the distances between schools in the entire province would have made it impractical to reach every school personally.

A period of one month was allowed to elapse from the time of the posting of the questionnaires. This time frame yielded a return of 30 by the respondents. In order to improve the return rate of the questionnaires each principal was contacted telephonically to ascertain whether she had received the questionnaire. These telephonic conversations revealed that of the 179 principals as listed in the EMIS statistics, 12 were males, 32 contact numbers either did not exist or they were not in service anymore, 3 were on sick leave and therefore stated that they would be unable to respond, 2 were not at their schools temporarily (one based at the district office and one based at Pretoria) and 2 were returned as a result of post office boxes being closed. This then dwindled the number of female principal respondents in secondary school in KwaZulu Natal to 128. Some of the problems that emerged were the reluctance of certain principals to complete the questionnaire. They cited time constraints and work commitments as reasons for their refusal to participate.

Out of this total of 128 only 47 questionnaires were returned after two months of waiting. Principals were once again contacted telephonically and finally a total of 49 out of the 128 respondents returned their questionnaires, which was a return rate of 38%. McNeill (1990) states that the major drawback of the postal method is that the response is usually around 30-40%. According to Huysamen (1994) this return rate is also supported in a number of other similar types of postal surveys, which seem to hover below the 40% level.

The 49 questionnaires, which served as the primary data source, were analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) Program. Kerlinger (1992:446) states, "the most natural tool with which to compare the interviews is the so called questionnaire". The scaled responses on the questionnaire enabled a descriptive analysis of the leadership styles of women principals and the open-ended questions assisted in triangulating to increase validity of claims and provide a level of explanation for the descriptions of leadership approaches women claim to be using.

3.6 Structure of Questions

The questionnaire (Appendix I) as a research tool consisted of 3 sections namely:

Section A -Biographical data included age, race, academic qualification, experience, ex-department of education to which the school belonged and location of school.

Section B - Scaled responses with the use of the Likert type of scale, starting from question no. 11 to 32. This part of the questionnaire elicited responses on the views, attitudes and beliefs based on the different aspects of leadership the respondents claim to ascribe to as principals of secondary schools.

Section C - A rating scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying *extremely* and 1 *not at all*, was used against adjectives to describe the personality of the women leaders. The traditional image of women is associated with nurturing and maternal characteristics. This scale was used to determine whether women saw themselves as having to transcend their feminine qualities to be effective leaders.

Section D - Open-ended questions. These questions were intended to assist in gathering information on the respondent's personal experiences and their views as women principals in the role of leadership. This qualitative component was used to triangulate the earlier responses with the later interviews.

The questions in Section B and Section D of the questionnaire and the interview focussed on different categories namely: approaches to leadership, the role of gender, decision-making, conflict- management, and values and beliefs. These categories were derived from the different roles the principal as leader of a school engages in for the smooth functioning of the organization.

3.6.1 Content of questions

The following table is a summary of questions and the categories used to focus on key aspects of leadership.

Features of leadership	14, 17, 22, 23, 28
Risk Taking	22, 23
Conflict solving	12, 26
Decision-making	19, 20
Team Building	28, 29
Gender and Leadership	11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 25, 27

3.6.1.1 Features of Leadership Approach

There are questions that were asked to investigate the aspects of leadership approaches used by the respondents. Brundett (1998) defines *collegiality* as educators conferring and collaborating with each other. This by implication means that power is shared amongst all role-players in an organisation. Questions 14, 17, 22,23 and 28 were asked to investigate whether women principals exercised their power by taking full authority and were very directive or encouraged discussion and participation. For example, question 17 “I focus on co-operation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding” will show whether a principal consults and involves all members concerning work-related matters and uses their ideas to benefit the school or largely does this on her own. This question may have been problematic for the respondents as ‘demanding’ conveys a negative approach while co-operation and consideration are viewed as positive characteristics. Looking at question 14 which states “In order to change traditions I as a leader have to impose my personal sense of vision” indicates that such a principal believes she is personally responsible to drive change herself and acts in an authoritative manner.

3.6.1.2 Risk Taking

Questions 22 and 23 were based on risk taking. Question 22 states “I expect leaders to take risks and do not mind taking risks as a leader”. Responses to this statement will show whether women as leaders are courageous and are prepared to take risks in their approach to leadership. For example, question 23 states “I try to persuade others in my management team to take risks as I do and support them in their decisions.” This question is based on the notion by Pashiardis (1998) that a principal who is willing to take risks creates an atmosphere for experimentation and innovation in their schools. This characteristic is also associated with effective educational leaders. In the changing South African educational scenario together with curriculum changes, for example Outcomes Based Education and Further Education and Training, an environment that allows for the generation of novel ideas and innovations will serve as an essential ingredient for educators to evaluate their expertise and resources and propose changes to manage their transforming environment.

3.6.1.3 Gender and Leadership

Al-Khalifa in T.Bush (1995) asserts that women adopt different styles as leaders placing greater emphasis on collaboration, co-operation and feminine behaviours that are compatible with collegiality. The masculine characteristics of aggressiveness, competitiveness with an emphasis on control are viewed as negative and dysfunctional. Blackmore (1999), however, offers the view that women as leaders display male characteristics of strength and discipline. Questions 11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 25 and 27 were constructed to determine whether female principals adopted masculine traits in order to fit into the bureaucratic nature of schools. For example, question 16 which states “Educators and parents expect me to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in my position as leader in the school” and question 25 “Gaining recognition and respect as a female leader for me is an immense challenge since I have to downplay feminine qualities to fit the position.”. The questions in this category focussed on the dilemma of gender – did women minimise their feminine traits of nurturing, caring and maternal in order to function as leaders? Since gender is a culturally constructed concept these

questions attempted to gain an insight into whether the respondents merely adopted the prevailing culture at their schools or shaped their roles according to their values and experiences.

3.6.1.4 Decision Making

The advent of Unionism and collective bargaining for educators has opened the way for much more input into the decision-making processes at the level of the school. This in turn has had an impact on the ability of principals to fulfil their decision-making roles and has influenced their leadership styles. However, for educators to reach decisions by consensus they must adopt a common set of values. This is not always easy to accomplish, thus the role of the leader will be to encourage, enhance and help to define these shared values and beliefs. In order to gain an understanding of the approach used by women principals in making decisions the following questions were asked. Question 19 “My position and authority as a leader rather than being a woman plays the most important role in arriving at decisions.” The responses to this question will reveal whether women in leadership positions were willing to embrace their power and authority and commit to decision-making without feeling threatened by her gender and feminine values of obedience and compliance. Van der Westhuizen states that with regard to decision-making where authority is delegated women often create the impression of her position of leader as “shaky and ineffectual” (1991:566). Question 21 states “Even though I make the final decisions I believe the management team must share in the responsibility for the consequences of those decisions”. This question attempts to find out if women principals share accountability and responsibility or took it upon themselves. That is where do women principals place accountability, and if they share responsibility or believe that accountability and responsibility for decisions taken rests upon themselves.

3.6.1.5 Delegation

The principal as the leader in a school is involved in various groups and teams and has to delegate tasks to other members in the school. The following questions relevant to delegation were therefore asked. Question 28 states “I delegate contact with staff, parents and students to the SMT in order to devote time to the overall mission and vision of the school.” It is possible that principals in their response to this question may consider the mission and vision of the school as more important than liaising with parents and will therefore avoid contact with parents by delegating the task to other members of staff. As this question is open to dual responses some principals may view the delegating of this task as a way of sharing responsibility. Question 29 “I take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others” will illicit information on whether the principal as a leader takes responsibility for activities that are delegated or will rather place the responsibility on other members in the school. That is whether the principal takes all the flak herself for consequences or puts the blame lower down.

3.6.1.6 Conflict/ Problem Solving

The world of the school is never without conflict and disagreements. Principals at schools often have to take the responsibility for resolving difficult situations. Their challenge then lies in achieving an outcome that will satisfy all members associated with the problem. In order to achieve this, the leader has to develop traits of fairness and justice and be able to suspend judgement. Question 26, which states, “I resolve problems because as a woman I can compromise without losing my temper in management situations” is based on the argument of Shakeshaft (1987) and Adler et al (1993) that men and women handle conflict differently. This question attempts to find out if women are more inclined to compromise in conflict situations in order to solve problems. The latter part of the question, ‘without losing my temper’ may be viewed as negative and responses by women may be chosen to show themselves as being in control of their emotions in conflict situations. Question 12 therefore states, “I expect staff to resolve their own disagreements rather than expect me to intervene.” This question will provide

information on whether women are prepared to diffuse problems encountered by staff or prefer to ignore them.

3.7 Semi – structured Interviews

“Semi – structured interviews allow the interviewer to use probes with a view to clearing up vague responses, or to ask for incomplete answers be elaborated on” (Huysamen 1994:145). I interviewed four principals choosing from the different ex racially segregated departments from the survey respondents. These principals were telephoned and requested to assist by permitting to be interviewed. “Interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives” (Silverman 1997:113). This interaction allowed me to elicit responses from a White, Coloured, Indian and African principal. Race was used as a criteria to ascertain if social expectations, prejudices and stereotypes defined the way women as leaders function. The African principal classified her school as being situated in a semi-rural area whilst the other three were described as schools in urban areas. The time and place to conduct these interviews were negotiated with the principals who indicated a willingness to participate in the research. The semi-structured interview provided direct evidence of leadership as articulated by these women principals and allowed me to probe the responses. However, there exists the possibility that respondents may give responses, which they think the interviewer expects of them. The interviewer is in a position to clear up any misunderstandings through semi – structured interviews. In order to produce rich data that reveals the interviewees’ perspectives, they must feel at ease and talk freely. As the interviewer, I communicated personal interest and attention by being attentive. This was not difficult to accomplish, as I am a woman in senior management at a combined school. Listening carefully then is an important aspect of the interview situation. “Treat every word as having the potential of unlocking the mystery of the subject’s way of viewing the world” (Bodgan and Biklen 1992:98). Trust in an interview must not be exploited. The four women principals were assured of confidentiality and consented to their interviews being recorded. Participants were interviewed at schools or in their homes as arranged by telephone conversations.

The categories focussed on in the interview paralleled that of the questionnaire viz. leadership approach, gender, decision-making and solving conflicts (interview schedule in Appendix II). The interviews, which served as the secondary data source, were analysed by transcribing each respondents views and identifying common views, attitudes and perception of women principals and their leadership. The interview data was then classified into themes and paralleled to the survey instrument in order to integrate the findings. Tesch and Cresswell states, “the process of data analysis is eclectic; there is no right way” (1994:153). Themes found in the questionnaires could then be explored through the interview data.

3.8. Limitations of the Research Methodology

The total population of women principals in secondary school was the target of this research, however the majority are based in outlying rural areas and therefore their views could only be elicited via the questionnaire, since time and money made it difficult to reach them for interviews.

I have stated that being a woman in senior management, I have also worked at schools with women principals and am aware of how some female principals lead their schools. There exists the possibility that I might have been biased in the interpretation of data because of my own experiences and understanding of leadership. It is also possible the manner in which the questions for the survey questionnaire was framed could have lead to ambiguities and different interpretations.

The study will only include principals at secondary schools in KwaZulu Natal that limits generalisations of this study to principals of secondary school in other provinces. Resources and contextual factors differ from province to province so it is possible that the experiences of principals in other provinces may be different.

Given the limited return rate of the questionnaires that were posted a wide range of responses could not be interrogated.

As a result of transformation taking place in South Africa, it is possible that by the time the results of the study are available, the approaches to leadership by women principals may have changed.

It could happen that principals will not be honest about their leadership and will offer an account to appear to be politically correct and favourable. Some principals may not welcome research of this nature and see it as an intrusion especially if they are experiencing difficulties at their schools.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the methodological approach used in the study. The qualitative and quantitative approach was used in order to widen the scope of the study. The essential themes of leadership as used in the research instruments were described.

Methods of data collection and analysis have been discussed as well as limitations. The following chapter will outline the findings of the study in the form of themes and categories relating to leadership as they emerged from the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research data generated from responses to the survey questionnaire and semi – structured interviews. Although the main focus was to investigate the leadership approach of women principals in high schools and why a particular approach was adopted, the research also aimed at finding out the challenges women as leaders face in this period of transformation. The analysis to the responses to the closed questions 1-42 will focus on the following categories used to construct the questions namely, leadership styles, decision-making, the role of gender in leadership, vision, values and beliefs, delegation and conflict management. As a validity check to responses in the closed questions and to get an indication to the “why” question, the open-ended questions asked respondents the following: What did they regard to be the 3 most important duties of a principal; a description of their leadership approach and reasons for adopting this approach; challenges they experienced and what did they dislike and avoid as leaders.

The semi – structured interviews conducted with 4 women principals from the four different ex racially categorised schools served as supporting data to the survey instrument. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a deeper insight into the leadership styles of female principals and whether there were differences amongst these respondents on the basis of cultural backgrounds and the type of school the women principals worked in. The interview data is analysed in terms of the following themes: leadership style; rationale for adopting this style; decision making; educators’ response and views on the approach adopted; difficulties experienced as female leaders as opposed to male leaders; personal attributes that assist them as women in their leadership roles. These themes paralleled the survey questionnaire and the findings were combined. Therefore qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse the data.

4.2 Respondents Biographical Details

The women principals who agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews and their schools will remain anonymous in response to the confidentiality they were promised. The four semi-structured interview participants have been given pseudonyms. The four participants are: Mary Smith (White), Rosa Dusart (Coloured), Devi Naidu (Indian), Zanele Khumalo (Black).

Four women principals interviewed

	Mary Smith	Rosa Dusart	Devi Naidu	Zanele Khumalo
Age	57	47	54	50
Experience	14 years	1 year	4 years	8 years
Race	White	Coloured	Indian	Black
Location of school	Urban	Urban	Urban	Semi-rural
Ex-Education Department	Ex-HOA	Ex-HOR	Ex-HOD	Ex-DET

The purpose of the biographical details was to gain knowledge about who the women principals in secondary schools in KwaZulu Natal are and to analyse their responses in terms of biographical categories. The length of experience as leaders, the description according to ex- departments of education, their age and academic qualifications was obtained.

A total of 49 women principals responded to the questionnaire, 1 was from the Coloured race group, 4 were White women, 8 were Indian and 36 were Black women.

Ex – Education department of schools.

The rationale for analyzing the data in terms of the ex-departments of education is based on the belief that despite ten years of much heralded democracy; the racial profiles of schools still remain intact. This is largely true in rural schools where transformation and redress of inequities has had little or no impact.

Table 1

What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * Ethnic group Crosstabulation

Q7		Ethnic group				Total
		African	Colored	Indian	White	
What Ex- Department does your school belong to ?	Ex-HOR	Count	1	0	0	1
		% of Total	2.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%
	Ex-HOA	Count	1	1	0	2
		% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	.0%	4.1%
	Ex-HOD	Count	1	0	7	8
		% of Total	2.0%	.0%	14.3%	16.3%
	Ex-DET	Count	11	3	0	14
		% of Total	22.4%	6.1%	.0%	28.5%
	KZ / EX-DEC (Kwaz)	Count	17	1	0	18
		% of Total	34.7%	2.0%	.0%	36.7%
Total		Count	31	5	7	43
		% of Total	63.3%	10.2%	14.3%	100.0%

Findings in this research consist of views of principals made up of 2.0% (1) from the ex – HOR; 8.2% (4) from the ex – HOA; 16.3% (8) from the ex – HOD; 34.7% (17) from the ex – DET and 38.8% (19) from the ex – DEC. Of the total of 49 principals as reflected in table 3, 31 of these respondents were African women, 5 were Coloured, 7 Indian and 6 White female principals. Black female principals were no longer in Black schools only as the evidence reveals the 3 black women had been promoted to principalship in previously designated White, Coloured and Indian schools. 4 of the 28 Black schools from the ex-Department of Education and Training and the ex-Department of Education and Culture are headed by white women principals. It is

likely the result of new policies that the promotion of women as heads of schools are based on merit therefore they are breaking ground and being accepted in schools where the culture of the women leaders maybe different. There has been a gradual attempt to appoint principals across previous racial categories. The data shows that women are being included in this.

The age brackets of the respondents

Table 2

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * Age group Crosstabulation

	Q5	Age group					Total
		36-40 years	41-45 years	46-50 years	51-55 years	56 and above	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	1	0	0	1	2	4
	% of Total	2.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	4.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	2	0	2	4	8
	% of Total	.0%	4.1%	.0%	4.1%	8.2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	1	3	2	6	5	17
	% of Total	2.0%	6.1%	4.1%	12.2%	10.2%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC (Kwaz	Count	1	6	5	4	3	19
	% of Total	2.0%	12.2%	10.2%	8.2%	6.1%	38.8%
Total	Count	3	11	7	14	14	49
	% of Total	6.1%	22.4%	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	100.0%

Table 2 reflects the age brackets of the respondents to the questionnaire. The statistics show that women principals tend to be rather senior in years with 58% being older than 50: 6.1% (3) of the respondents are between 36-40 years; 22.4% (11) fall in the age group between 41-45 years; 14.3% (7) are between 46 – 50 years and 28.6% are between 51 – 55 years and 28.6% (14) are 56 years and above. This is an indication that the majority of the women principals have many years of experience in the field of education and further discloses that women principals are promoted rather late in their teaching careers, as none of these respondents were younger than 35 years of age. Of the 4 females who were interviewed 3 were above 50 years of age and 1 was 47 years old. This could also mean

that women did not apply for leadership positions or that their applications were not successful.

Academic and professional qualifications

Table 3

What Ex- Department does your school belong to? * Education Cross tabulation

Q6		Education				Total
		Teacher's Diploma	Bachelor's Degree +Teacher's Diploma	Honour's Degree	Master's Degree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	2	1	1	4
	% of Total	0%	4.1%	2.0%	2%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	2	3	2	1	8
	% of Total	4.1%	6.1%	4.1%	2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	0	5	9	3	17
	% of Total	0%	10.2%	18.4%	6.1%	34.7%
KZ/Ex-DEC (Kwaz	Count	0	7	6	6	19
	% of Total	0%	14.3%	12.2%	12.2%	38.8%
Total	Count	2	17	19	11	49
	% of Total	4.1%	34.7%	38.8%	22.4%	100%

Women principals in the Black schools and especially rural schools are well qualified with majority having honours and above qualification. Respondents with Honours Degrees was represented by 38.8% (19) and Masters Degrees by 22.4% (11) and of the total of 49 just 4.1% (2) had a teacher's diploma only. Of the 22.4% of the principals with Masters Degrees 18.3% (9) of these were African females from the Ex – DET and Ex – DEC education departments. Further investigation revealed that only one Indian and one Coloured principal had obtained their Masters Degree and no White Principal was in possession of this qualification. Of the 9 African females with Master's Degrees, 1 was under 40 years of age, 4 were between 41-45 years and 4 were between the ages of 46-50. In the ex-DET and ex-DEC schools 11 of the 15 respondents with Honours Degrees were over 40 years of age. The principals of 14 schools in remote rural areas had Honours

Degrees and 2 had obtained their Masters Degrees. The distribution of respondents according to their qualifications as reflected in the table3 indicates that female principals are highly qualified in the field of education and are likely to have acquired the necessary skills in order to manage and lead schools. This finding also indicates that black women principals are highly qualified as a group with 48.98% of the total respondents from the ex-DET and DEC schools having an Honours or Masters degree.

Location of school

Table 4

What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * Location of your school Crosstabulation

	Q9	Location of your school			Total
		Remote Rural	Semi-Rural	Urban	
Ex-HOR	Count	1	0	0	1
	% of Total	2.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	1	1	2	4
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	4.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	1	1	6	8
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	12.2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	8	4	5	17
	% of Total	16.3%	8.2%	10.2%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC (Kwazulu)	Count	12	6	1	19
	% of Total	24.5%	12.2%	2.0%	38.8%
Total	Count	23	12	14	49
	% of Total	46.9%	24.5%	28.6%	100.0%

The location of the school was also taken into account since the possibility exists that experiences in rural schools could be very different from those in urban areas, given that the majority of the schools from the ex-DET and DEC, as reflected in this study, are in rural areas. Table 4 indicates that 23 (46.9%) of the principals who responded are in schools are from remote rural areas and 12 (24.5%) are from semi rural.

Experience in the post of principal

Table 5

**What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * Number of years in the post of principal
Crosstabulation**

Q10		Number of years in the post of principal				Total
		1-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-20 years	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	1	2	1	0	4
	% of Total	2.0%	4.1%	2.0%	.0%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	4	3	1	0	8
	% of Total	8.2%	6.1%	2.0%	.0%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	5	6	5	1	17
	% of Total	10.2%	12.2%	10.2%	2.0%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC (Kwazulu)	Count	5	5	7	2	19
	% of Total	10.2%	10.2%	14.3%	4.1%	38.8%
Total	Count	15	17	14	3	49
	% of Total	30.6%	34.7%	28.6%	6.1%	100.0%

Women principals are relatively new in leadership positions in secondary schools.

Table 5 shows that a large number of respondents 64.13% (32) have between 1 – 9 years of experience as principals while only 6.1% (3) enjoy the experience of between 15 – 20 years in the post of principal. This is of interest to note, given the recent introduction of the Gender Equity Act (1996) which appears to be taken into consideration and suggests that more women are being given opportunities of leadership and are being promoted to the post of principal at secondary schools. The analysis reveals that more than 64.13% have been promoted in the post apartheid era and 42.86% are Black principals in ex-DET and DEC schools.

4.3 Features of Leadership

Women, who are promoted to the ranks of leadership and are expected to understand and fit into a system which males, have dominated. Features of leadership that are explored are: a description of the approach used, feminine qualities of nurturing and caring, collegial aspects such as co-operation and consideration and risk taking. Females as principals have to establish an approach that will enable them to work effectively and confidently in order to lead their schools in the desired direction. The challenge for women principals is whether to fit into a pre-conceived role of leadership or to transform themselves and reframe leadership in terms of their own ways of thinking and experience. Questions were constructed to gain an insight into the leadership style and the strategies the respondents claim to use. The questions attempted to establish the extent to which feminine qualities such as nurturing and caring are valued and were taken to indicate that the leader paid more attention to such concerns. Taking risks would be required to implement change and transformation and would be indicative of a leader who was prepared to innovate and be experimental, but taking risks can also be negative, for example a leader can may act recklessly. By taking risks and making personal sacrifices, they adopt a transformational style in order to facilitate change.

I as a leader have to impose my personal sense of vision

Table 6

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * In order to change traditions I as a leader have to impose my personal sense of vision Crosstabulation

Q14		In order to change traditions I as a leader have to impose my personal sense of vision					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	2	0	1	1	4
	% of Total	.0%	4.1%	.0%	2.0%	2.0%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	3	1	1	1	2	8
	% of Total	6.1%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	4.1%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	5	1	2	4	5	17
	% of Total	10.2%	2.0%	4.1%	8.2%	10.2%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC (Kwazulu)	Count	4	7	2	1	5	19
	% of Total	8.2%	14.3%	4.1%	2.0%	10.2%	38.8%
Total	Count	12	12	5	7	13	49
	% of Total	24.5%	24.5%	10.2%	14.3%	26.5%	100.0%

From table 6, it is interesting to note that 49% (24) of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that they need to impose their vision on the school to change tradition.

However 40.8% (20) agreed that this is necessary in order to change traditions. Of the principals who indicated that they would impose their vision on the staff 30.6 % (15) came from the ex-DET and ex-DEC schools. An in-depth look into the responses from the 3 principals from the ex-HOD schools who strongly disagreed on imposing their personal sense of vision showed that they described their approach to leadership in the following manner: *“dynamic –a change agent has to work together”*, *“working as a team together each of us achieve more”*, *“inclusivity promotes the spirit of team-building”*. Their responses suggest that they are not in favour of an authoritarian approach. However the responses from 2 respondents from the ex-HOD schools who strongly agreed that they need to impose their personal sense of vision was not in keeping with their responses in the open-ended questions relating to their preferred style of leadership. Their contradiction was reflected in the following responses: *“I ensure success by ensuring that others share in the responsibility and vision of the school”* and *“I’m fair and compassionate by listening to others and their vision”*. These 5 principals from the ex-HOD schools were over the age of 50 years. The 9 African principals who strongly disagreed with this statement were from the remote rural area (6) and semi rural area (3). Of these respondents 7 were over 40 years and 2 between 36-40 years. The responses to

the open-ended questions correlate with this finding. These are some of their responses with regards to their approach to leadership: *“democratic style, preferring to guide”, “democracy works better and is supported by the constitution”, “every role player has an input to make”, “one cannot achieve success without involvement”*. Of the 10 principals from the ex DET and DEC schools who strongly agreed on imposing their personal sense of vision, 6 were principals from schools in remote rural areas and 3 from schools in semi-rural areas. Only 1 Principal was in a school in an urban area. 7 of these women principals were over the age of 40 years and 3 between the ages of 31-39, yet the common thread in their responses to the leadership approach adopted was that: *“participation promotes a feeling of ownership”, “being democratic because people believe in transparency”, “success rests on teamwork”, “as a leader one must work co-operatively”*. Only 1 principal from a school in the remote rural area strongly agreed that she needs to impose her personal sense of vision stated in her response regarding her style of leadership that: *“I like things done the way I explain and at staff meetings, staff simply come to listen”*. This could suggest that this principal seeks to give strong, direct guidance or instructions in the school.

However the women principals who were interviewed responded, suggesting that they are more amenable and open to suggestions from educators.

Zanele: *I always give people a chance to come up with some ideas of how things should run and I give them a leeway to operate in whatever way they want as long as it is in keeping with the expectations of the school.*

Mary: *An open door policy is the best way of dealing with people. You must get a feel of what the others want, and get them to buy into a common idea.*

Devi: *I am free to suggestions on policies. I give educators, even learners for that matter an opportunity to come up with their own initiatives.*

The responses from the participants suggest that women as leaders focus on building democratic processes at their schools, listen and allow spaces for other members of staff.

According to Adler, Laney and Packer “Women show respect for their audience by listening and remembering what has been said” (1993:123).

Nurturing rather than decisive and assertive

Table 7

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * Educators and parents expect me to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in my position as leader in the school. Crosstabulation

Q16		Educators and parents expect me to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in my position as leader in the school.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	2	0	1	0	3
	% of Total	.0%	4.2%	.0%	2.1%	.0%	6.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	1	4	2	0	1	8
	% of Total	2.1%	8.3%	4.2%	.0%	2.1%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	1	5	3	5	3	17
	% of Total	2.1%	10.4%	6.3%	10.4%	6.3%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	4	8	2	3	2	19
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	4.2%	6.3%	4.2%	39.6%
Total	Count	6	20	7	9	6	48
	% of Total	12.5%	41.7%	14.6%	18.8%	12.5%	100.0%

Nurturing qualities are associated with women and their roles as mothers and care-givers. Table 7 illustrates the responses of all respondents with regards to their role as leaders and their gender. Most principals (53.12%) disagreed that they are expected to be nurturing and caring indicating that as leaders the expectation is that they must be decisive and assertive in order to guide, direct, control and monitor the personnel and activities of the school. The 12 respondents from the ex-Dec schools who disagreed/strongly disagreed that they are expected to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive were from schools in the remote rural (6) and semi-rural (6) areas. Of these principals 6 were highly qualified with masters degrees and 6 had more than 10 years of experience as principals. Only 3 of the principals were younger than 40 years of age. This data may imply that with experience and high qualification these principals have gained the necessary confidence and are taking on the more masculine features of leadership. Traditionally feminine values of nurturing and caring were not considered to be behaviours of good leaders (Shakeshaft 1987). From the ex-DET department 8 respondents agreed with this statement, 6 of the schools were in remote rural areas. It is

possible that in the rural communities with more traditional environments, nurturing and caring qualities are highly regarded as a characteristic for principals.

The interviewees, however reported a different experience of how parents and educators expected them to portray themselves as leaders in more nurturing roles.

Mary: *They think we as females and we must get more involved, we're mothers- it's like at home with the children, it's the mothers problem to comfort and be nice.*

Devi: *Especially with people who are not coping with their work or got personal problems, you know domestic, I must be a type of mother figure.*

Zanele: *I'm a female they usually think I should be softer to them.*

Most of the interviewees refer to an expectation of a nurturing and feminine quality as part of being a principal.

Self reliant and demanding

Table 8

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I focus on co-operation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding. Crosstabulation

Q17		I focus on co-operation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding.				Total
		Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	1	0	1	2	4
	% of Total	2.0%	.0%	2.0%	4.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	0	5	3	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	10.2%	6.1%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	0	1	7	9	17
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	14.3%	18.4%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	4	0	7	8	19
	% of Total	8.2%	.0%	14.3%	16.3%	38.8%
Total	Count	5	1	21	22	49
	% of Total	10.2%	2.0%	42.9%	44.9%	100.0%

Values such as sharing, compassion and support in an educational environment are viewed as feminist values (Mc Crea & Enrich 1999). Responding to this statement, it was found that 86.18% (Table 8) of the principals did focus on co-operation and consideration. The question may have been problematic in that it is double-barrelled in nature. The latter part of the question namely, 'self-reliant and demanding' could have been deemed to have a negative effect. Respondents, therefore, may have responded overwhelmingly to the aspects of consideration and co-operation to possibly ensure that they are viewed in a favourable light.

Nevertheless it appears that the concept of collegiality and working together play an important role in women principals' interaction with members of the school community. The inter-personal style of leadership was also evident in the interviews conducted with the 4 principals. They highlighted the relational aspects of working together, of being empathetic and making staff members feel comfortable:

Mary: *If there is a specific structure to decide on, what I found recently that works very nice is that I have divided my staff into 4 groups and then I said, go and workshop it, I will give you twenty minutes, each group gave us feedback and we adopted a structure and they can be happy, I don't think we can work if we're unhappy, no I'm not like that.*

Devi: *Let's face it today we have a lot of people who like to challenge especially authority because of that I always allow for flexibility, I try to accommodate everybodys' inputs....their proposals.....and the R and R (rationalisation and redeployment) they have gone through a very traumatic period and for them to come out of it, it has taken a lot and they need to be reminded all the time they needed, to be spoken to and made to feel good at all times.*

Zanele: *Everybody is allowed ...given a chance to express themselves and see what is good and discard what is not suitable for that particular time.*

From the findings in table 8 it appears that women attempt to foster co – operation and consideration in their styles of leadership. Coleman (2000) supports this view in her research stating that the majority of females use a collaborative and people orientated style of management.

Taking risks as a leader

Table 9

What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * I expect leaders to take risks and I do not mind taking risks as a leader. Crosstabulation

Q22		I expect leaders to take risks and I do not mind taking risks as a leader.				Total
		Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	0	1	3	4
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.0%	6.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	0	3	5	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	6.1%	10.2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	1	1	8	7	17
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	16.3%	14.3%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	2	1	6	10	19
	% of Total	4.1%	2.0%	12.2%	20.4%	38.8%
Total	Count	3	2	18	26	49
	% of Total	6.1%	4.1%	36.7%	53.1%	100.0%

Question 22 focussed on taking risks as a leader. Table 9 illustrates that women principals are prepared to take risks as indicated by the high number who agreed 89.8% (44) on this statement. However 6.1 (3%) of the principals from the ex-DET and DEC schools disagreed, indicating their unwillingness to take risks. They hailed from schools in the rural areas and were between the ages of 35-40 years. It is possible that in the rural areas where tribal chiefs are in authority, women who appear strong and take risks may face criticism. Of the 4.1% (2) respondents who were unsure, both were relatively young (between the ages of 36-40) with leadership experience of between 1-4 years. It is

possible that the limited experience of these principals may constrain them when it comes to taking risks. Pashiardis (1998) supports the notion that a principal who is willing to take risks create an atmosphere for experimentation and innovation in their schools. Taking risks was typically identified as a characteristic of male leaders, however the analysis suggests that women as leaders are also prepared to take risks (Bass & Stogdill 1990). This quality is also associated with effective educational leaders.

Supporting Risks

Table 10

hat Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I try to persuade others in my management tea to take risks as I do and support them in their decisions. Crosstabulation

Q23		I try to persuade others in my management team to take risks as I do and support them in their decisions.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	0	0	2	2	4
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.1%	4.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	0	1	3	4	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.0%	6.1%	8.2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	1	1	1	10	4	17
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	20.4%	8.2%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	0	2	0	8	9	19
	% of Total	.0%	4.1%	.0%	16.3%	18.4%	38.8%
Total	Count	1	3	2	23	20	49
	% of Total	2.0%	6.1%	4.1%	46.9%	40.8%	100.0%

Female principals as leaders also claim to encourage and support members of the management team in taking risks. The analysis showed that most of the respondents 80.17% (43) engaged in supportive behaviour for the decisions taken by the School Management Team.

A nurturing and caring leader rather than tough and decisive.

Table 11

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I believe that the success of the school depends on my being a nurturing and caring leader rather than tough and decisive. Crosstabulation

Q24		I believe that the success of the school depends on my being a nurturing and caring leader rather than tough and decisive.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	1	0	1	1	3
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	2.1%	2.1%	6.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	1	2	1	2	2	8
	% of Total	2.1%	4.2%	2.1%	4.2%	4.2%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	1	3	2	7	4	17
	% of Total	2.1%	6.3%	4.2%	14.6%	8.3%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	0	4	3	4	8	19
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	6.3%	8.3%	16.7%	39.6%
Total	Count	2	10	6	15	15	48
	% of Total	4.2%	20.8%	12.5%	31.3%	31.3%	100.0%

In response to question 24, refer to table 11, it was found that 62.6% agreed that they have to demonstrate nurturing and caring qualities in order to achieve success at their schools. Question 17 also revealed that 86.18% of women principals claim to use co-operation and consideration as leaders. Women leaders according to gender socialization are viewed as nurturing, relational and collaborative (Collard 2001). However, in question 16 the majority indicated that parents and educators expected them as leaders to be decisive and assertive and not nurturing. This then could see women as principals own expectations in conflict with that of parents and educators in the construction of their role as leaders. Attributes of toughness, aggressiveness and competitiveness are often valued in organizations and as such emphasize and reward power (Blackmore & Sachs 2000). However Acker (in Blackmore and Sachs 2000) observes that “women’s work is about tiring work, incorporating, caring and service, with responsibilities that are often not regarded a demanding, high skill and not rewarded” (p. 4). Women principals by relying on feminine qualities are seen to be in contrast to the traditional expectations of leadership, which generally influences organizations (Grogan 1999).

Principals who were interviewed also indicated that they were expected to be caring and nurturing.

Zanele: I am a good listener, I talk with people, I am empathetic, they appreciate me because they know I see them as humans and not just workers.

Devi: You know with the rules and regulations that there is, because by being caring and accommodating I tend to allow many requests. I think I need to improve and be a little more assertive.

Mary: I like to move around...the admin side can be done after hours and weekends. I love to be around and see what is going on and my staff must see that I am available.

The responses of the participants suggest that they are caring and nurturing. It would seem that women bring the aspects of caring and nurturing from the traditional arena, the home, into the school and their style of leadership. According to Harris (in Reynolds and Young 1995), women lead from the heart, they seek connections and they prefer to be with their co-workers rather than above them.

Over compensate in human concerns

Table 12

**What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I often over -compensate in human concerns
Instead of achieving a balance between the goals of the school and my sense of compassion.**
Crosstabulation

Q30		I often over -compensate in human concerns instead of achieving a balance between the goals of the school and my sense of compassion.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	2	2	0	0	4
	% of Total	.0%	4.2%	4.2%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	6	1	1	0	8
	% of Total	.0%	12.5%	2.1%	2.1%	.0%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	3	9	1	3	1	17
	% of Total	6.3%	18.8%	2.1%	6.3%	2.1%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	1	8	4	3	2	18
	% of Total	2.1%	16.7%	8.3%	6.3%	4.2%	37.5%
Total	Count	4	26	8	7	3	48
	% of Total	8.3%	54.2%	16.7%	14.6%	6.3%	100.0%

Although the majority of the respondents stated that being nurturing and caring leads to the success of the school, their responses to the above question indicate that they balance their compassionate and caring nature to ensure that the goals of the schools are realized. Of the respondents to the questionnaires 62.5% (30) disagreed with this statement (table 12). It is also evident that 18.9% (9) of the respondents agreed that they overcompensate in human concerns. These principals were from the ex-DET and ex-DEC schools situated in remote rural areas (7) and semi-rural areas.

The 4 participants interviewed indicated that they were empathetic to educators but were also firm and fair in the different situations they experience in their schools. Although their approach is people – centred and they seem to adopt a less hierarchical approach to leadership they were not prepared to compromise on the goals of the schools. The interviewees responded in the following manner:

Devi: *You see although I said tolerance and patience but I have always had a strong personality and to me hard work, commitment and dedication have always been my forte, irrespective of what the situation, irrespective of how much support I get, I would still go forward and carry my responsibilities to the fullest even if it means I'm doing it alone.*

Mary: *But apart from that I'm very fair and I love children and I love people so I have a relaxed way of communicating with them - I am a no- nonsense person. I will not take anything that is not with the benefit of the child. And my staff knows*

Principals respond to situations differently depending on their experience and the manner in which they conceptualise leadership. The changes in legislation in South Africa (for example, The South African Schools Act) also necessitates that leaders review their approach to leadership in accordance with human dignity, justice and fairness as enshrined in The Bill of Rights. Principals of schools are no longer the sole managers of schools but have to operate in conjunction with the School Governing Bodies (SGB) and the School Management Team (SMT). The data suggests that that women principals focus on a participatory and collaborative style of leadership. They are likely to work in a co-operative way and use power and authority to empower colleagues.

4.4 Decision – Making

Closed questions 19 and 21 focussed on decision-making.

Table 13

What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * My position and authority as leader rather than being a woman plays the most important role in arriving at decisions Crosstabulation

Q19		My position and authority as leader rather than being a woman plays the most important role in arriving at decisions					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	0	1	1	2	4
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.0%	2.0%	4.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	0	1	3	4	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.0%	6.1%	8.2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	0	1	0	4	12	17
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	.0%	8.2%	24.5%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	1	1	1	3	13	19
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	6.1%	26.5%	38.8%
Total	Count	1	2	3	11	32	49
	% of Total	2.0%	4.1%	6.1%	22.4%	65.3%	100.0%

Table 14

What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * Even though I make the final decisions I believe the management team must share in the responsibility for the consequences of those decisions. Crosstabulation

Q21		Even though I make the final decisions I believe the management team must share in the responsibility for the consequences of those decisions.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	2	0	0	2	4
	% of Total	.0%	4.1%	.0%	.0%	4.1%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	1	0	3	4	8
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	.0%	6.1%	8.2%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	1	1	1	4	10	17
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	8.2%	20.4%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	0	1	0	5	13	19
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	.0%	10.2%	26.5%	38.8%
Total	Count	1	5	1	13	29	49
	% of Total	2.0%	10.2%	2.0%	26.5%	59.2%	100.0%

Table 13 shows that 87.7 % (43) of the respondents agreed that their position and authority played an important role in decision-making and 85.7 % (table 14) agreed that although the principal is responsible for the final decision, responsibility for the consequences of those decisions must be shared by the School Management Team. From this finding it would appear that female leaders, despite advocating a participatory style of leadership rely on their position and status as leaders to arrive at decisions. It is interesting to note that 4.1% (2) white women principals disagreed that the responsibility for decisions taken must be shared, thus suggesting that as principals they are ultimately accountable for decisions that are made. Both of these respondents were over 50 years of age, in urban schools with 5-9 years of leadership experience.

However the four participants who were interviewed were asked to respond to what they would consider as important in the decision – making processes at school. They indicated that participation and collective decision making was used by them as a strategy in leadership. The following points were highlighted

Zanele: I think you have to take into account that particular problem about which you have to decide, what the outcomes are going to be and how these are going to affect the people you are working with.

Devi: You know I always say I believe in a collective decision, it has to come from the entire group. To me that is important whatever decision is taken must be supported by the majority and must be transparent.

Rosa: Participation I think by everybody that works every time, getting level one teachers involved in the decision-making.

Mary: When we're in the staffroom we have certain decisions to take. And they will question it and then I will listen to their ideas, they will give their side if I feel my decisions is to the benefit of the everybody then I say to them I've listened to what you've said and this is how I want it and that's it and then we will go off.

The interviewees indicated that they consult with all staff members, sometimes via the staff representatives but they feel that a time limit must be given to finalise discussions as quite often democracy leads to too much of time spent discussing which could result in *“everybody falling off the bus”* as stated by Mary or that too much of deliberation in taking decisions ended in working *“too much in a circle and then I realize whatever proposal I made at the beginning of the discussion actually got carried right at the end”* as noted by Devi.

4.5 Gender in Leadership

Morgan as cited in Adler et al (1993) states that organizations are dominated by gender related values and it therefore makes a great deal of difference whether you are a woman or man. Women in organizations are therefore confronted with a double bind of being ‘feminine’ as well as ‘businesslike’ (Adler et al 1993). Gender as a cultural concept highlighted the hierarchical difference between men and women as well as masculine and feminine characteristics. The masculine traits in the world of work have always been viewed positively and in a dominant position. Some tasks are seen as feminine and others as masculine, for example a school secretary was always expected to be female whereas a plumber was the task of a male. With the world of work being transformed and the barriers between what is considered women’s work and that which is a man’s work, it is important to understand how females as leaders construct their identities and experience leadership.

Having to display greater courage and resilience than male colleagues

Table 15

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I have to display greater courage and resilience than male colleagues in order to ensure staff work together positively. Crosstabulation

Q13		I have to display greater courage and resilience than male colleagues in order to ensure staff work together positively.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	1	2	0	1	4
	% of Total	.0%	2.0%	4.1%	.0%	2.0%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	2	2	0	2	2	8
	% of Total	4.1%	4.1%	.0%	4.1%	4.1%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	3	5	1	3	5	17
	% of Total	6.1%	10.2%	2.0%	6.1%	10.2%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	1	3	1	6	8	19
	% of Total	2.0%	6.1%	2.0%	12.2%	16.3%	38.8%
Total	Count	6	12	4	11	16	49
	% of Total	12.2%	24.5%	8.2%	22.4%	32.7%	100.0%

Table 15, shows that a large number of respondents (55.1 %) feel that a greater display of courage and resilience as a result of being female is necessary in order to ensure a positive working environment. Of this percentage, 44.8% (22) of the respondents were African female principals from the ex-DET and DEC schools and 14 of these schools were in rural areas. This could mean that women principals in rural schools have to work harder at achieving a balance between their roles as authority figures and their expected behaviour at home and in their community.

My input is not valued and taken seriously at principals' meetings because I am a woman.

Table 16

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I feel that my input is not valued and taken seriously at principals meetings because I am a women Crosstabulation

Q18		I feel that my input is not valued and taken seriously at principals meetings because I am a women					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	2.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	2	2	0	0	0	4
	% of Total	4.1%	4.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	4	4	0	0	0	8
	% of Total	8.2%	8.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	10	4	1	1	1	17
	% of Total	20.4%	8.2%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	10	6	0	2	1	19
	% of Total	20.4%	12.2%	.0%	4.1%	2.0%	38.8%
Total	Count	27	16	1	3	2	49
	% of Total	55.1%	32.7%	2.0%	6.1%	4.1%	100.0%

The majority of women principals 87.8 % disagreed with this statement. This then indicates that women perceive themselves to be given due recognition at principals' forums that are generally dominated by men and have broken into the "old boys club". It could also mean that men have welcomed women into the fold of management and no longer see them as female and therefore inferior and incapable of leadership or that women assert themselves in these meetings. Another possible reason for respondent's perception that their inputs were viewed as being important could be linked to their high qualification. From question 6 it is clear that the overwhelming majority (47) possess bachelor and post graduate degrees and therefore display confidence at principals' forums. However, 5 of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this statement. All of these principals were graduates, over the age of 40 years and 4 of them had over 10 years of experience as principals. Of the 5, 4 of their schools were in remote rural areas and 1 in a semi-rural area. The perception that their views were not valued and taken seriously at principal's meetings could be linked to their responses to the open-ended question: "My greatest challenge in being a leader is....". Some of their responses were:

- *proving to male counterparts that women leaders can do it too*
- *self-confidence and not to undermine myself because I am a women among a large number of male staff*
- *that of being accepted by local councillors (men) because I happen to be a woman*

These responses could suggest that male-dominated structures and values are still in place in rural areas.

Share a better relationship with female managers than with male managers.

Table 17

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I have a better relationship with female managers that with male managers. Crosstabulation

Q20		I have a better relationship with female managers that with male managers.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	.0%	2.0%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	4	0	0	0	4
	% of Total	.0%	8.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.2%
Ex-HOD	Count	2	6	0	0	0	8
	% of Total	4.1%	12.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	16.3%
Ex-DET	Count	9	5	1	1	1	17
	% of Total	18.4%	10.2%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	34.7%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	7	7	1	1	3	19
	% of Total	14.3%	14.3%	2.0%	2.0%	6.1%	38.8%
Total	Count	18	22	2	3	4	49
	% of Total	36.7%	44.9%	4.1%	6.1%	8.2%	100.0%

Responding to the above statement, table 17 shows that 80.16 % disagreed with this statement. In a patriarchal society it is surprising to note that female managers do not enjoy good interpersonal relationship with their female counterparts. This could suggest that women do not support women in leadership and probably still expect males to be in charge of formal organisations as a result of cultural socialization. However, this question could have been interpreted differently and it could also mean that women principals do not think there are any differences in their relationship with men or women as was also indicated in the interviews. Of note are 3 women principals from the ex-DEC department

who strongly agreed that they share a better relationship with female managers than with male managers. Their schools are in remote rural areas, 2 of these principals are over 40 years of age and enjoyed between 10 to 14 years of experience as principals.

The participants interviewed indicated that there no were differences between the responses of males and females to their directives. The following comments were noted:

Mary: *When it comes to my instruction, I can't really draw a line between males and females.*

Devi: *Personally I don't feel that way, I feel that I get the same kind of response from both males and females.*

Feminine intuition and emotions makes me more understanding and effective

Table 18

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * My feminine intuition and emotions makes me more understanding and effective as a leader. Crosstabulation

Q27		My feminine intuition and emotions makes me more understanding and effective as a leader.				Total
		Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	2	0	2	0	4
	% of Total	4.2%	.0%	4.2%	.0%	8.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	1	0	3	4	8
	% of Total	2.1%	.0%	6.3%	8.3%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	0	1	12	4	17
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	25.0%	8.3%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	2	2	10	4	18
	% of Total	4.2%	4.2%	20.8%	8.3%	37.5%
Total	Count	5	3	27	13	48
	% of Total	10.4%	6.3%	56.3%	27.1%	100.0%

Table 19

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * Gaining recognition and respect as a female leader for me is an immense challenge since I have to downplay feminine qualities to fit the position
Crosstabulation

Q25		Gaining recognition and respect as a female leader for me is an immense challenge since I have to downplay feminine qualities to fit the position.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	1	2	0	0	1	4
	% of Total	2.1%	4.2%	.0%	.0%	2.1%	8.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	4	1	1	2	0	8
	% of Total	8.3%	2.1%	2.1%	4.2%	.0%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	3	5	1	4	4	17
	% of Total	6.3%	10.4%	2.1%	8.3%	8.3%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	0	4	3	6	5	18
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	6.3%	12.5%	10.4%	37.5%
Total	Count	8	13	5	12	10	48
	% of Total	16.7%	27.1%	10.4%	25.0%	20.8%	100.0%

In response to question27 (refer to table 18), 83.4 % (40) agreed that the feminine quality of intuition and emotions assisted them in being more understanding and effective as a leader. This finding as shown in table 18 could imply that women as leaders are not averse to using female characteristics of feeling and emotion when exercising leadership with staff members. However, this is in contrast to the responses to question 25 as shown in table 19 where 45.8% (22) agreed that they had to downplay feminine qualities to fit the position of leader. This finding could suggest that women value their activities of care and emotional connections with staff members but had to downplay their feminine qualities in order to fit into the bureaucratic and “masculine” nature of schools or they use feminine qualities privately rather than publicly in exercising leadership.

4.6 Delegation

Delegation is an important mean which principals can utilize to promote democracy and participation in the school as an educational organization with the aim of promoting co-operation, teamwork and collegiality. Delegation, which can be viewed as the transfer and sharing of power and responsibilities, allow other members to express their interest

and demonstrate their abilities and expertise. It also allows principals to manage many functions more effectively. By delegating tasks to other members in an organization such as the school, principals can effectively empower and build capacity amongst staff members.

Table 20

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I delegate contact with staff,parents and students to the SMT in order to devote time to the overall missions and vision of the school.
Crosstabulation

Q28		I delegate contact with staff,parents and students to the SMT in order to devote time to the overall missions and vision of the school.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	1	0	3	0	4
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	6.4%	.0%	8.5%
Ex-HOD	Count	1	1	0	3	3	8
	% of Total	2.1%	2.1%	.0%	6.4%	6.4%	17.0%
Ex-DET	Count	1	4	1	9	2	17
	% of Total	2.1%	8.5%	2.1%	19.1%	4.3%	36.2%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	2	3	1	6	5	17
	% of Total	4.3%	6.4%	2.1%	12.8%	10.6%	36.2%
Total	Count	4	9	2	21	11	47
	% of Total	8.5%	19.1%	4.3%	44.7%	23.4%	100.0%

Table 21

What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others. Crosstabulation

Q29		I take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	1	0	1	2	4
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	2.1%	4.2%	8.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	0	2	0	2	4	8
	% of Total	.0%	4.2%	.0%	4.2%	8.3%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	1	1	0	5	10	17
	% of Total	2.1%	2.1%	.0%	10.4%	20.8%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	0	1	1	6	10	18
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	2.1%	12.5%	20.8%	37.5%
Total	Count	1	5	1	15	26	48
	% of Total	2.1%	10.4%	2.1%	31.3%	54.2%	100.0%

In response to question 28, table 20 shows that 68.1 % of the respondents agreed that they delegate contact with staff, parents and learners to the School Management Team in order to devote time to the overall mission and vision of the school. However, although activities are delegated to others, they take responsibility for the outcomes. This can be seen in table 21 where 83.7% of the women principals indicate that they are responsible for the consequences of decisions adopted by staff. Table 21 also showed that 6 of the respondents disagreed with taking responsibility for the outcomes of tasks delegated.

4.7 Conflict Management

Table 22

What Ex- Department does your school belong to ? * I expect staff to resolve their own disagreements rather than expect me to intervene. Crosstabulation

Q12		I expect staff to resolve their own disagreements rather than expect me to intervene.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	3	0	1	0	4
	% of Total	.0%	6.3%	.0%	2.1%	.0%	8.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	2	3	0	2	1	8
	% of Total	4.2%	6.3%	.0%	4.2%	2.1%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	3	6	0	6	2	17
	% of Total	6.3%	12.5%	.0%	12.5%	4.2%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	5	4	1	7	1	18
	% of Total	10.4%	8.3%	2.1%	14.6%	2.1%	37.5%
Total	Count	10	17	1	16	4	48
	% of Total	20.8%	35.4%	2.1%	33.3%	8.3%	100.0%

The responses to question 12, which reads, “I expect staff to resolve their own disagreements rather than expect me to intervene” showed that 55.12% of the women principals disagreed with this statement. This could suggest that as leaders of the institution it was their responsibility to resolve conflict rather than avoid it implying that the respondents reacted to conflict quickly and earlier. Conflict, if unresolved can become dangerous and unhealthy for a school.

I resolve problems because as a woman I can compromise without losing my temper

Table 23

**What Ex- Department does yours school belong to ? * I resolve problems because as a women I can compromise without losing my temper in managment situations.
Crosstabulation**

Q26		I resolve problems because as a women I can compromise without losing my temper in managment situations.				Total
		Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Ex-HOR	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.1%	.0%	2.1%
Ex-HOA	Count	0	2	1	1	4
	% of Total	.0%	4.2%	2.1%	2.1%	8.3%
Ex-HOD	Count	1	0	5	2	8
	% of Total	2.1%	.0%	10.4%	4.2%	16.7%
Ex-DET	Count	2	2	8	5	17
	% of Total	4.2%	4.2%	16.7%	10.4%	35.4%
KZ / EX-DEC	Count	2	1	9	6	18
	% of Total	4.2%	2.1%	18.8%	12.5%	37.5%
Total	Count	5	5	24	14	48
	% of Total	10.4%	10.4%	50.0%	29.2%	100.0%

Table 23 shows that the majority of the respondents (79.2 %) agreed that by not losing their tempers they were able to resolve conflicts. The findings suggest that women are able to resolve problems by remaining calm and using compromise as a strategy to resolve problems. This could imply that women leaders are not hard and unyielding but flexible in their endeavour to resolve conflict. According to Shakeshaft (1987) male and female leaders were most effective when they used compromising and conciliatory strategies, but that these strategies were most often employed by women.

Section C of the questionnaire required that respondents rank themselves on a numerical rating scale of 1 = not at all; 2 = only slightly; 3 = moderately; 4 = very and 5 = extremely. The analysis of the ten adjectives used served to provide possible insights into how female rated themselves as leaders.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strong	-	-	12.2	49.1	32.7
Tolerant	-	-	18.4	53.1	26.5
Assertive	-	4.1	8.2	53.1	32.7
Firm	-	-	8.2	55.1	34.7
Compassionate	-	-	12.2	49.0	36.7
Decisive	-	2.0	6.1	63.3	26.5
Empathetic	-		8.2	49.0	36.7
Fair	-	-	4.1	44.9	49.0
Rational	-	2.0	8.2	49.0	38.8
Competitive	10.2	6.1	14.3	36.7	28.6

Assertive, firm, decisive, rational and competitive are masculine traits while compassionate, empathetic, tolerant and fair are identified as female values. In the above data for this study the majority of women principals identified themselves strongly on all of these character traits. It is difficult to then assert that women principals as leaders claim purely feminine qualities. It is also possible that all leaders would prefer to have all of these qualities.

The following chapter deals with the discussion of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The study of women principals' leadership styles in the four ex – departments of education, historically classified by race, is discussed and concluded in this chapter. This discussion and recommendations is integrated with the open ended section of the questionnaire. The focus of the study was to investigate the leadership approaches of women principals in secondary schools, and to explain why do women principals adopt these approaches.

The above critical questions are explored in terms of the following aspects.

- Approaches to leadership.
- Transformation and Leadership
- Gender and Leadership

5.2. Approaches to Leadership

Of the 49 respondents 42 (85.7%) described their leadership approach as being democratic. Democracy to women principals means involving all stakeholders in participating and sharing the responsibility for the outcomes achieved. To describe the leadership approach they adopted, respondents in both the questionnaires and interviews used words such as: “flexible, innovative, negotiate, goal – directed, accommodating, participatory, inclusive, firm but fair, approachable and collaborative”. Owens (1995) notes that educators tend to recognize and see as powerful those principals who utilize collaborative and collegial methods of working together. Although the underlying principle of leadership was closely related to democracy, respondents deviated from this to a more assertive approach to ensure the completion of tasks. They did not hesitate to be firm and decisive if the situation demanded this. For example “if exam question papers were not handed in on time, educators were asked to remain in school and complete this even if it meant leaving school later than usual”.

They were willing to listen to all members of staff and treat them with respect but they did not hesitate to assert themselves when the situation demanded. For example, some respondents stated that they were “disciplined”, “staff knows that I am a no nonsense person”, “I have to be flexible but lead critically at the same time”. 2 of the 4 White female principals felt that although they were collaborative, accommodating and fair to parents they were accused of being racist especially when it came to learner admissions, as quite often the right decisions were unpopular and parents reported them to the department of education.

Although leadership has been studied over a long period of time there is no agreement on a single conceptual definition of leadership. Approaches to leadership have not succeeded in differentiating personality characteristics that belong specifically and solely to leaders; rather gender and cultural values has influenced the way knowledge on leadership has been created. The findings from this study indicate that the leadership approach adopted by women principals maybe described as participatory and transformational. The results reflect that 49% of the respondents disagreed that they would impose their personal sense of vision on staff members. The 4 women principals who were interviewed expressed a similar view. Imposing a vision denotes an authoritarian approach. The findings suggest that women as leaders preferred a people-centred approach as 86.18% indicated that they focus on co-operation and consideration which is a feature of the participatory approach. They were also prepared to delegate tasks as indicated by 68.1% and share leadership. Women can therefore be seen to use power to empower other staff members thus suggesting a transformational quality.

Leadership effectiveness as postulated in traditional approaches focuses on competitiveness, however the women leaders in this study enacted their role with collaboration and co – operation in mind, which negates the notion that to be an effective leader one has to focus on the drive to compete and to win. The traditional bureaucratic view of leadership with the leader being the person wielding power has undergone change and is now seen as transformational where followers and leaders aspirations, motives, values and goals become interdependent.

Risk taking appeared to be a feature of the women principals' leadership style. The findings indicate that 89.8% agreed that they as leaders are willing to take risks. It can be concluded that women are transformational in their approach to leadership as risk taking indicates that such a leader is creative and innovative encouraging other members to also be proactive and seize opportunities to meet the demands of transformation.

Contemporary approaches to leadership are viewed as transformational and facilitative and differ from the traditional hierarchical and bureaucratic approaches, which discriminates against women. The findings indicate that the women principals in this study were more inclined towards the contemporary approaches as leaders since it ensures participation, power – sharing, greater trust and mutual benefit to the leader and the followers. In order to be a catalyst for change in South Africa leaders would benefit if they are able to transform and empower others.

5.3 Transformation and Leadership

The transformation of schools to be effective learning environments appeared to be one of the main priorities of the women principals.

5.3.1 Academic Excellence

Transformation and achieving academic excellence was high on the agenda of 53.1% (26) of the women principals. Their vision was to transform their schools so that learners will emerge with the necessary skill and high moral and academic values. Some responses were, “there are many changes, therefore we need to be competitive and aim for high moral and academic values”, “I am committed to academic excellence”, “to transform the school to achieve high academically”.

5.3.2 The culture of learning and teaching

The majority of the respondents 35 (71.4%) expressed that a conducive environment for teaching and learning was their main priority. This will result in transforming the culture of their schools and result in a realization of the vision and mission of the school.

Statements such as: “restoring COLTS is a priority;” “only through COLTS can we realize our vision and goals;” “COLTS will make everyone responsible and to do things right” The possible reason that for wanting to effect such transformation could be as a result of most principals indicating that it was difficult and a challenge to control learners since the new generation is easily influenced with learners focussing more on rights rather than responsibilities, which led to indiscipline. In order to create an effective environment most principals expressed that safety and security was important.

As leaders most 65% (32) were of the view that ensuring safety and security would reduce vandalism, the anxiety levels of learners and educators and create a more relaxed atmosphere, which would be conducive to effective teaching and learning. They responded by stating: “we need security, there is too much vandalism”, Security and safety must be reworked, we are at the hands of criminals.”

5.3.3 Implementation of Departmental Policies

21 (42.8%) principals felt that implementing departmental policy and liaising with the department was important. By ensuring that policies are implemented they believed it would lead to a smoother running of their schools. The following responses were noted: “there is smooth running of the school if department policies are adhered to,” “ principals are responsible for implementing departmental policies and liaising with the department”.

Although transformation featured prominently in the women principals’ leadership role, it was deemed to be a challenging task. Amongst the Indian principals, changing mindsets in order to manage transformation was a challenge as well as funding for schools and managing finances. White female principals, on the other hand, were disillusioned with the lack of recognition from the Department of Education and found it difficult to remain

committed to a system they described as “dysfunctional”. Respondents from all the four race groups experienced difficulty in motivating and raising the morale of educators which they feel has been destroyed by the constant change in policies, salaries not being timeously paid and rationalization and redeployment resulting in insecurity and uncertainty.

5.4 Genders and Leadership

5.4.1 Sexist Attitudes

A woman’s concept of career has been shaped by gender and race. The literature surveyed has revealed that endocentric bias and the patriarchal nature of society makes it difficult for women to enter the field of leadership. Although feminine qualities are devalued in leadership, findings from this study indicate that 62.6% of women leaders expressed that they preferred to be nurturing and caring rather than tough and decisive. Feminine qualities are hence incorporated in their leadership approach.

Findings from this study suggest that African women in rural areas still suffer as a result of the cultural concept of gender. Women principals in the rural areas experienced sexist attitudes from their male counterparts. This response was made by 19 (54%) of the 35 school principals in rural areas and could be linked to question 13 that showed that of the 49 respondents, 22 African females from the rural areas felt that they had to display greater courage and resilience in order to ensure that staff work positively together. Local councillors who were mainly males did not recognize their authority as leaders of secondary schools on the basis of their gender. This was attributed to their leadership position and authority being in conflict with the councillors in these areas and they did not enjoy recognition from these elders as a result of being women. They experienced gender equity in these areas as a problem, as a result of the belief that leaders must be men. Women therefore experienced a lack of confidence and felt undermined especially by predominantly male colleagues who expected them to be infallible. Mistakes were attributed to their gender and they experienced difficulty in disciplining boys. They therefore had to prove to males that females could be effective leaders as well. The

following are some of their responses: “Being a female in a big school with 1096 learners and 34 staff members in a rural area where gender equity is still a problem”, “There is a common belief that the principal must be a man, therefore I have to be perfect” and “proving to males that females are good leaders as well”.

Further, the findings reflected that women principals felt that their input was not valued and given attention at principals meetings. They also experienced sexist attitudes from males on their staff, as the position of principal was still synonymous with that of a male. The patriarchal nature of our South African society is the main reason for social patterns, which are also in operation at the level of the school.

5.4.2 The leadership of Women Principals

Transition and democracy in South Africa after many years of apartheid and the struggle for liberation also herald a change in the education system. Equity and equality redressed women’s absence as leaders in secondary schools. The role of the principal as the school leader has undergone change from traditional person in control to a “leading professional, committed to participatory decision-making” (Collarbone et al 1999: 2).

Findings from this study reports that the majority of the respondents view decision making as a collective process in their schools and therefore endeavour to involve all role-players in order to promote collaboration and collegiality and reduce distrust and conflict. The results also report that 87.7% of women principals in this study perceived that their position and authority is important in making decisions. 85.7% of the respondents support the idea that the consequences for decisions taken must be shared by the school management team. According to Davidoff and Lazarus, “decision-making processes relate directly to issues of power” (2000:104). The women principals approach to decision-making is indicative of collaboration and shared power. Their styles focus on co – operation and consideration, open communication and involvement with others. Although masculine virtues of decisiveness, incisiveness and strength are idealized as leadership and women’s style of leadership which identified as the ethics of care can position women as self-sacrificing when they have to negotiate to arrive at decisions,

these women principals showed a commitment to sharing and including others and they did not hesitate to take lead when the situation demanded.

The relationship with staff reflected feminine values in that they were more considerate, willing to listen and avoided conflict. Findings from this study report that women would prefer to steer clear of conflict but did not avoid its presence in schools. 55.12% of the respondents disagreed that staff should solve their own problems suggesting that they as leaders intervene to solve problems of staff. Their focus on co – operation was to ensure harmony and lower resistance, build a sense of family and an environment of trust and respect. They therefore resorted to conciliatory approaches to solve problems. The belief that feminine intuition and being emotional, as reported by 83.4% of the respondents, made them more understanding as leaders. The people centred nature of their approach was indicative of female characteristics of caring for and valuing staff. Rosener states that an “interactive style leads them (women) to favour a consensual and collaborative process, a preference often attributed to the female concern for personal relationships”(1995:129).

Women principals were also sensitive to the demands and challenges in their schools. They were prepared to serve as facilitators supporting colleagues who rose to the challenges of change and were willing to take risks. They placed emphasis on transparency, openness and honesty in their inter – personal relationship with members of staff. Positive relationship with the parent community was welcomed in order to improve learner achievement. Booysen (2004) concurs with this view that the female leadership style emphasise collaboration, participation, intuition, empathy and follow-leaders relationships as interactional and transformational.

It is important for school leaders to base their style on a set of values and strong moral purpose in order to build effective school. In order to negotiate positive outcomes, co – operation and alignment of others to their values and vision is vital. The principals ensured that their personal vision and belief systems were communicated to parents and staff and they engaged all role-players in arriving at a shared vision for the school. They

believed in the potential for growth and development and therefore respected and treated each person as an individual. They responded to the need for being supportive, caring and encouraging, values that are viewed as feminine, but did not hesitate to be decisive and confrontational when necessary.

From the four women principals interviewed it became evident that they perceived their flexible and democratic approach to leadership as a challenge and stated that they would like to change this and become more assertive. Being accommodating and adopting an open door policy often meant they had to work harder “doing it alone”. As a result of their sense of empathy colleagues often took advantage of them. For example, female colleagues expected to be treated differently when they absented themselves frequently on the basis of sick children and they also expected sympathy in the form of being given a lighter workload.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the above findings it is evident that women have broken the glass ceiling and not only entered the male – dominated sphere of school leadership but have negotiated the terrain to fit their personal characteristics as women in order to be effective leaders. The following recommendations need to be borne in mind:

- Leadership approaches should be revisited by educational policy makers to include the contribution women as leaders can make to the existing concepts.
- The establishment of leadership centres to promote leadership skills that women lack, such as assertiveness in order to enhance their leadership strategies.
- The criteria for the appointment of principals as leaders must include the ability to lead transformationally in order to democratise the schools as the hub of society.
- The establishment of networks at circuit, regional and national level. Such groups will assist women leaders to identify and share good practice and provide one another with mutual support. Such networks will also enable women leaders to share experiences in order to find solutions and bring new information for mutual benefit.
- Coaching and mentoring of newly appointed women principals by experienced and successful women principals who can provide a deeper understanding of the requirements and problems in school leadership.
- The norms, values and beliefs of society should focus on the transformational roles of women in order to change the traditional hierarchy of organizations and male domination so as to achieve true equality between the sexes. This will allow for an increase in women as school leaders who can influence a change in culture

of schools in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and reshape the power structures of educational organizations.

- There is also a need to design programmes to prepare men to serve under female leaders to eradicate not only sexist attitudes but also give women a voice, recognize their work and accord them the respect they deserve.
- Research on the leadership styles of women principals in South Africa should be encouraged and supported so as to investigate the effectiveness of female leadership styles.
- Workshops on sexism should be organised for rural school principals, where the women as participants share their experiences of sexist attitudes and initiate ways of supporting each other.

Conclusion

From the research findings it is evident that women as leaders lean towards a participative, inclusive approach irrespective of race. Although there might exist differences as a result of traditional values and resources, the conclusion can then be drawn that women favour collaboration instead of a top-down approach to leadership. There was no overwhelming evidence that the feminine qualities hindered them as leaders, but they often need to resort to masculine traits of a greater display of courage and resilience to ensure a positive working environment. Collaboration can be seen as an effective strategy in a group leadership process. Although groups can function in the traditional bureaucratic mode of “command and control”, a collaborative style was used more effectively because it empowers individuals, develops an environment of trust and group members are allowed the opportunity to demonstrate and capitalize on unique and diverse abilities, skills and talent.

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Appendix I

Interview Schedule – Women Principals

1. How would you describe your leadership style?

2. Why do you adopt this particular style Give an example of an action or decision to illustrate this.

3. How long have you adopted this style?

4. In your view how is your leadership style viewed by educators in your school?

5. Do males and females react differently towards you as leader? Provide some examples to substantiate this.

6. Which staff respond promptly to directives:
 SMT vs Level 1
 Males vs Females
7. Have you experienced a particular difficulty as a woman principal that you think male principals do not face from educators? (If yes, identify educator's gender and describe possible reasons for this attitude.)

8. Do educators question your decisions and, when? How do you respond to this?

9. In your view what would you consider important in the decision making processes at school?

10. What personal attributes do you possess that assist you in your leadership role?(eg. solving conflicts)

11. What aspect of your leadership would you like to improve and why?

Appendix II

Questionnaire

Please fill in the questionnaire and post it back as soon as possible. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose other than this research. Only my supervisor - Dr R. Vithal and myself will have access to it.

Section A: Biographical and General Information for purposes of possible follow-up interviews.

Where blocks are provided for your response, place a tick in the appropriate block.

1. Your Title : (Dr. /Miss./ Mrs./Ms.) _____
2. Surname: _____
3. Your Names: _____
4. Your contact details:
School Telephone: _____
Cellular phone: _____
Home Telephone: _____
School Physical Address: _____

Home Address: _____

5. Age (tick appropriate block)

Less than 30years

31 -35 years

36 - 40 years

41 - 45 years

46 - 50 years

51 – 55 years

56 and above

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	7

6. Your highest academic qualification is:

Teacher's Diploma

Bachelor's Degree + Teacher's Diploma

Honour's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctural Degree

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5

7. What Ex – Department does your school belong to?

Ex – HOR
Ex – HOA
Ex – HOD
Ex – DET

	1
	2
	3
	4

8. Race

African
Colored
Indian
White
Other

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

9. How would you classify the geographical location of your school?

Remote Rural
Semi Rural
Urban

	1
	2
	3

10.

Number of years in the post of principal.

1 - 4 years
5 – 9 years
10 – 14 years
15 – 20 years

1

2

3

4

Section B: Complete the questionnaire below by placing a cross in the appropriate scale.

Note:

Strongly Agree : 5
Agree : 4
Not Sure : 3
Disagree : 2
Strongly Disagree : 1

As a woman principal ...	5	4	3	2	1
11. I think that careers breaks for maternity leave works against being promoted.					
12. I expect staff to resolve their own disagreements rather than expect me to intervene.					
13. I have to display greater courage and resilience than male colleagues in order to ensure staff work together positively.					
14. In order to change traditions I as a leader have to impose my personal sense of vision.					
15. My success as a leader is based on my strong moral values.					
16. Educators and parents expect me to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in my position as leader in the school.					
17. I focus on co-operation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding.					
18. I feel that my input is not valued and taken seriously at principals meetings because I am a woman.					
19. My position and authority as leader rather than being a woman plays the most important role in arriving at decisions.					
20. I have a better relationship with female managers than with male managers.					
21. Even though I make the final decisions I believe the management team must share in the responsibility for the consequences of those decisions.					
22. I expect leaders to take risks and I do not mind taking risks as a leader.					
23. I try to persuade others in my management team to take risks as I do and support them in their decisions					
24. I believe that the success of the school depends on my being a nurturing and caring leader rather than tough and decisive.					
25. Gaining recognition and respect as a female leader for me is an immense challenge since I have to downplay feminine qualities to fit the position.					
26. I resolve problems because as a woman I can compromise without losing my temper in management situations.					

27. My feminine intuition and emotions makes me more understanding and effective as a leader.					
28. I delegate contact with staff, parents and students to the SMT in order to devote time to the overall mission and vision of the school.					
29. I take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others.					
30. I often over – compensate in human concerns instead of achieving a balance between the goals of the school and my sense of compassion.					
31. Parental involvement is important for learner achievement but must not intrude on the professional matters of the school.					
32. I prefer to follow strict procedures and established ways of communication to ensure smooth running of the school and minimal conflict.					

Section C: Rank yourself on each of the following using the scale of 1 – 5.

Note : 5 = extremely and

1 = not at all

	5	4	3	2	1
33. Strong					
34. Tolerant					
35. Assertive					
36. Firm					
37. Compassionate					
38. Decisive					
39. Empathetic					
40. Fair					
41. Rational					
42. Competitive					

Section D: Provide a brief description in response to the following questions.

43. The 3 most important responsibilities and duties of my role as principal are _____

44. I would describe my leadership approach as... _____

45. I adopt this specific approach (above) because

46. My greatest challenge in being a leader is....

47. As a leader I dislike and avoid _____

Thank you for your response. I would be happy to assist your school in any way I can.

Should you wish to contact me, my details are as follows:

Mrs. A.R.Pillay

Tel: 031 – 706 1826 (W)

031 – 409 7443 (H)

15 September 2003

Dear Madam

I am a Masters student in the School of Educational Studies at the University of Durban-Westville. The topic of my dissertation is ***Leadership Styles of Women Principals in Secondary Schools***. Permission from the Department of Education and ethical clearance by the university has been obtained.

My research is prompted by the perception that women principals are not as effective as their male counterparts. The approach that women use to lead might give individuals the impression that they are incapable of effectively running the school as an organization. Moreover, the perception that principalship is a demanding position and that women are not able to meet these demands is another setback against which women principals have to function.

Kindly assist me by completing the attached questionnaire in order to enable me to obtain relevant information for this research topic. I wish to assure you that all information will be treated as **strictly confidential** and will be utilized for the purpose of this research **only**. To assist me in my data collection please complete the questionnaire, at your earliest convenience, and return in self-addressed envelope provided.

Should you have any queries, feel free to contact me on:

Telephone (home): 031-4097443

(work): 031-7061826

Cell: 0837322288

E-mail : selvan @ aers.co.za

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Asha Pillay
Researcher



eTHEKWINI REGION

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eTHEKWINI STREEK

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Enquiries: V.I. NGIDI
Imibuzo:
Navrae:

Reference:
Inkombo:
Verwysing:

Date: 18/08/03
Usuku:
Datum:

Mrs Asha R. Pillay
Savanah Park Secondary School
P.O. Box 561025
CHARSWORTH
4030

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

1. The above subject refers.
2. Permission to conduct research in KZN Secondary Schools is granted.
3. You are however advised to make necessary arrangements with principals to ensure that the school program proceeds uninterrupted.
4. Regarding the statistical information required, you are advised to contact the Provincial Office i.e Ulundi.
5. Wishing you all the success in your endeavours.


V.I. NGIDI
EXECUTIVE SUPPORTSERVICES

18/08/2003
DATE